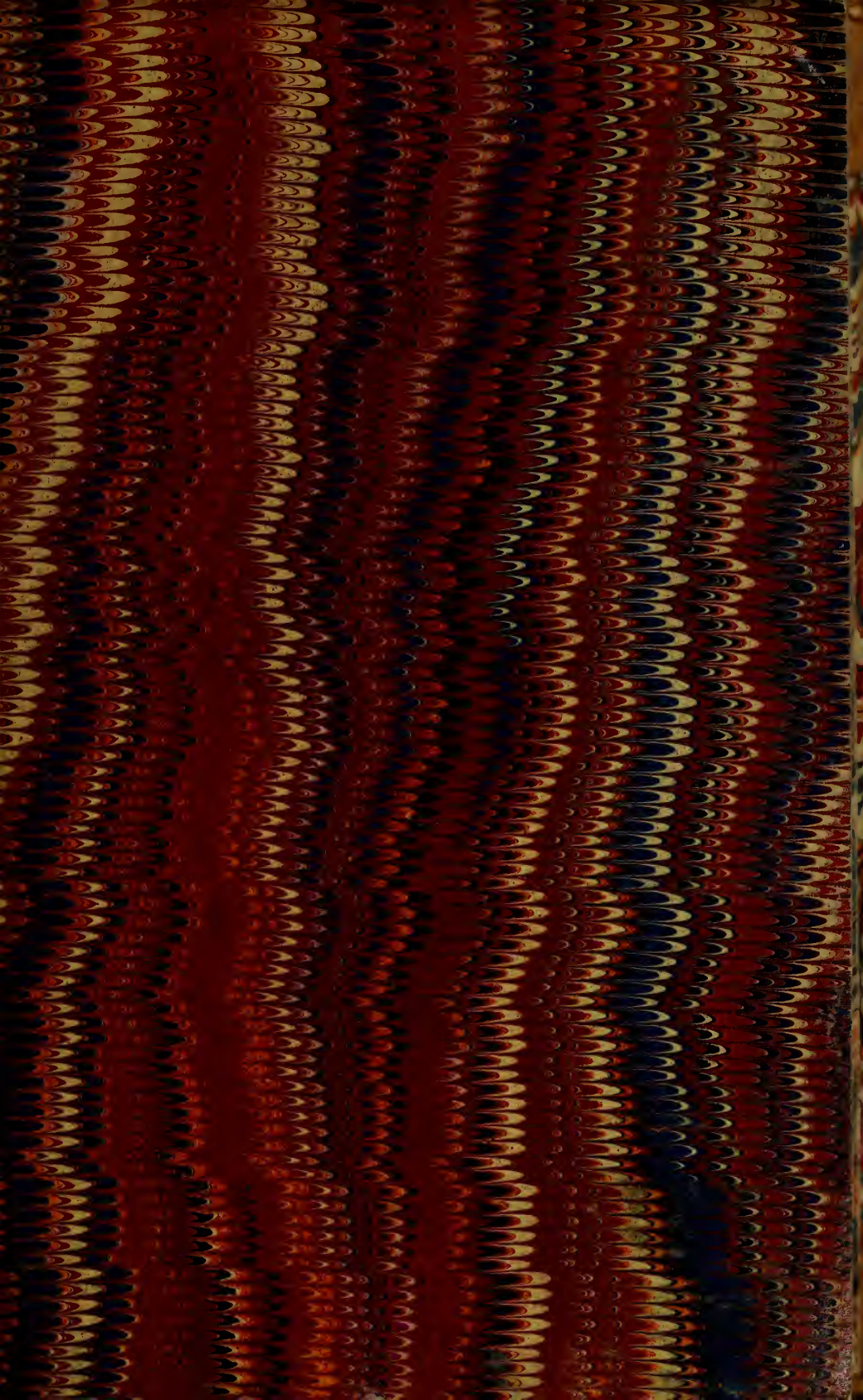




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Pickwick Papers.

What the matter with the horse that's whipped Mr. Winkle's dog queer downy fardles?



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WORKS

OF

CHARLES DICKENS.

HOUSEHOLD EDITION.

ILLUSTRATED FROM DRAWINGS BY F. O. C. DARLEY  
AND JOHN GILBERT.

THE PICKWICK PAPERS.

VOL. II.

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THE POSTHUMOUS PAPERS  
OF  
THE PICKWICK CLUB.



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POSTHUMOUS PAPERS  
OF  
THE PICKWICK CLUB.

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CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH IS GIVEN A FAITHFUL PORTRAITURE OF TWO DISTINGUISHED PERSONS; AND AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF A PUBLIC BREAKFAST IN THEIR HOUSE AND GROUNDS; WHICH PUBLIC BREAKFAST LEADS TO THE RECOGNITION OF AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE, AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANOTHER CHAPTER.

MR. PICKWICK'S conscience had been somewhat reproaching him, for his recent neglect of his friends at the Peacock; and he was just on the point of walking forth in quest of them, on the third morning after the election had terminated, when his faithful valet put into his hand a card, on which was engraved the following inscription.

*Mrs. Leo Hunter.*

*The Den. Eatanswill.*

“Person's a-waitin',” said Sam, epigrammatically.

“Does the person want me, Sam?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“ He wants you particklar ; and no one else’ll do, as the Devil’s private secretary said, ven he fetched away Doctor Faustus,” replied Mr. Weller.

“ *He*. Is it a gentleman ? ” said Mr. Pickwick.

“ A verry good imitation o’ one, if it a’n’t,” replied Mr. Weller.

“ But this is a lady’s card,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“ Given me by a gen’l’m’n, hows’ever,” replied Sam, “ and he’s a-waitin’ in the drawing-room — said he’d rather wait all day, than not see you.”

Mr. Pickwick, on hearing this determination, descended to the drawing-room, where sat a grave man, who started up on his entrance, and said, with an air of profound respect, —

“ Mr. Pickwick, I presume ? ”

“ The same.”

“ Allow me, sir, the honor of grasping your hand — permit me, sir, to shake it,” said the grave man.

“ Certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick.

The stranger shook the extended hand, and then continued.

“ We have heard of your fame, sir. The noise of your antiquarian discussion has reached the ears of Mrs. Leo Hunter — my wife, sir ; *I* am *Mr.* Leo Hunter ” — the stranger paused, as if he expected that Mr. Pickwick would be overcome by the disclosure ; but seeing that he remained perfectly calm, proceeded :

“ My wife, sir — Mrs. Leo Hunter — is proud to number among her acquaintance all those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works and talents. Permit me, sir, to place in a conspicuous part of the list the name of Mr. Pickwick, and his brother members of the club that derives its name from him.”



“I shall be extremely happy to make the acquaintance of such a lady, sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“You *shall* make it, sir,” said the grave man. “Tomorrow morning, sir, we give a public breakfast — a *fête champêtre* to a great number of those who have rendered themselves celebrated by their works and talents. Permit Mrs. Leo Hunter, sir, to have the gratification of seeing you at the Den.”

“With great pleasure,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Mrs. Leo Hunter has many of these breakfasts, sir,” resumed the new acquaintance, — “‘feasts of reason, sir, and flows of soul,’ as somebody who wrote a sonnet to Mrs. Leo Hunter on her breakfasts, feelingly and originally observed.”

“Was *he* celebrated for his works, and talents?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“He was, sir,” replied the grave man; “all Mrs. Leo Hunter’s acquaintance are; it is her ambition, sir, to have no other acquaintance.”

“It is a very noble ambition,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“When I inform Mrs. Leo Hunter that that remark fell from *your* lips, sir, she will indeed be proud,” said the grave man. “You have a gentleman in your train, who has produced some beautiful little poems, I think, sir.”

“My friend Mr. Snodgrass has a great taste for poetry,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“So has Mrs. Leo Hunter, sir. She dotes on poetry, sir. She adores it; I may say that her whole soul and mind are wound up and entwined with it. She has produced some delightful pieces herself, sir. You may have met with her ‘Ode to an expiring Frog,’ sir.”

“I don’t think I have,” said Mr. Pickwick.

"You astonish me, sir," said Mr. Leo Hunter. "It created an immense sensation. It was signed with an 'L' and eight stars, and appeared originally in a Lady's Magazine. It commenced

' Can I view thee panting, lying  
On thy stomach, without sighing;  
Can I unmoved see thee dying  
On a log,  
Expiring frog! ' "

" Beautiful!" said Mr. Pickwick.

" Fine," said Mr. Leo Hunter, " so simple."

" Very," said Mr. Pickwick.

" The next verse is still more touching. Shall I repeat it?"

" If you please," said Mr. Pickwick.

" It runs thus," said the grave man, still more gravely.

' Say, have fiends in shape of boys,  
With wild halloo, and brutal noise,  
Hunted thee from marshy joys,  
With a dog,  
Expiring frog! ' "

" Finely expressed," said Mr. Pickwick.

" All point, sir, all point," said Mr. Leo Hunter, " but you shall hear Mrs. Leo Hunter repeat it. *She* can do justice to it, sir. She will repeat it, in character, sir, to-morrow morning."

" In character!"

" As Minerva. But I forgot — it's a fancy dress breakfast."

" Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, glancing at his own figure — " I can't possibly" —

" Can't, sir; can't!" exclaimed Mr. Leo Hunter. " Solomon Lucas, the Jew in the High Street, has thou-

sands of fancy dresses. Consider, sir, how many appropriate characters are open for your selection. Plato, Zeno, Epicurus, Pythagoras — all founders of clubs.”

“I know that,” said Mr. Pickwick; “but as I cannot put myself in competition with those great men, I cannot presume to wear their dresses.”

The grave man considered deeply, for a few seconds, and then said, —

“On reflection, sir, I don’t know whether it would not afford Mrs. Leo Hunter greater pleasure if her guests saw a gentleman of your celebrity in his own costume, rather than in an assumed one. I may venture to promise an exception in your case, sir — yes, I am quite certain that on behalf of Mrs. Leo Hunter I may venture to do so.”

“In that case,” said Mr. Pickwick, “I shall have great pleasure in coming.”

“But I waste your time, sir,” said the grave man, as if suddenly recollecting himself. “I know its value, sir. I will not detain you. I may tell Mrs. Leo Hunter, then, that she may confidently expect you and your distinguished friends? Good-morning, sir, I am proud to have beheld so eminent a personage — not a step, sir; not a word.” And without giving Mr. Pickwick time to offer remonstrance or denial, Mr. Leo Hunter stalked gravely away.

Mr. Pickwick took up his hat, and repaired to the Peacock, but Mr. Winkle had conveyed the intelligence of the fancy ball there, before him.

“Mrs. Pott’s going,” were the first words with which he saluted his leader.

“Is she?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“As Apollo,” replied Mr. Winkle. “Only Pott objects to the tunic.”

"He is right. He is quite right," said Mr. Pickwick emphatically.

"Yes; — so she's going to wear a white satin gown with gold spangles."

"They'll hardly know what she's meant for; will they?" inquired Mr. Snodgrass.

"Of course they will," replied Mr. Winkle indignantly. "They'll see her lyre, won't they?"

"True; I forgot that," said Mr. Snodgrass.

"I shall go as a Bandit," interposed Mr. Tupman.

"What!" said Mr. Pickwick, with a sudden start.

"As a bandit," repeated Mr. Tupman, mildly.

"You don't mean to say," said Mr. Pickwick, gazing with solemn sternness at his friend, "You don't mean to say, Mr. Tupman, that it is your intention to put yourself into a green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail?"

"Such *is* my intention, sir," replied Mr. Tupman warmly. "And why not, sir?"

"Because, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, considerably excited. "Because you are too old, sir."

"Too old!" exclaimed Mr. Tupman.

"And if any further ground of objection be wanting," continued Mr. Pickwick, "you are too fat, sir."

"Sir," said Mr. Tupman, his face suffused with a crimson glow. "This is an insult."

"Sir," replied Mr. Pickwick in the same tone, "It is not half the insult to you, that your appearance in my presence in a green velvet jacket, with a two-inch tail, would be to me."

"Sir," said Mr. Tupman, "you're a fellow."

"Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "you're another!"

Mr. Tupman advanced a step or two, and glared at Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick returned the glare, con-

centrated into a focus by means of his spectacles, and breathed a bold defiance. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle looked on, petrified at beholding such a scene between two such men.

“Sir,” said Mr. Tupman, after a short pause, speaking in a low, deep voice, “you have called me old.”

“I have,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“And fat?”

“I reiterate the charge.”

“And a fellow.”

“So you are!”

There was a fearful pause.

“My attachment to your person, sir,” said Mr. Tupman, speaking in a voice tremulous with emotion, and tucking up his wristbands meanwhile, “is great — very great — but upon that person I must take summary vengeance.”

“Come on, sir!” replied Mr. Pickwick. Stimulated by the exciting nature of the dialogue, the heroic man actually threw himself into a paralytic attitude, confidently supposed by the two by-standers to have been intended as a posture of defence.

“What!” exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass, suddenly recovering the power of speech, of which intense astonishment had previously bereft him, and rushing between the two, at the imminent hazard of receiving an application on the temple from each, “What! Mr. Pickwick, with the eyes of the world upon you! Mr. Tupman! who, in common with us all, derives a lustre from his undying name! For shame, gentlemen; for shame.”

The unwonted lines which momentary passion had ruled in Mr. Pickwick’s clear and open brow, gradually melted away, as his young friend spoke, like the marks

of a black-lead pencil beneath the softening influence of India rubber. His countenance had resumed its usual benign expression, ere he concluded.

"I have been hasty," said Mr. Pickwick, "very hasty. Tupman; your hand."

The dark shadow passed from Mr. Tupman's face, as he warmly grasped the hand of his friend.

"I have been hasty too," said he.

"No, no," interrupted Mr. Pickwick, "the fault was mine. You will wear the green velvet jacket?"

"No, no," replied Mr. Tupman.

"To oblige me, you will," resumed Mr. Pickwick.

"Well, well, I will," said Mr. Tupman.

It was accordingly settled that Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass should all wear fancy dresses. Thus Mr. Pickwick was led by the very warmth of his own good feelings to give his consent to a proceeding from which his better judgment would have recoiled — a more striking illustration of his amiable character could hardly have been conceived, even if the events recorded in these pages had been wholly imaginary.

Mr. Leo Hunter had not exaggerated the resources of Mr. Solomon Lucas. His wardrobe was extensive — very extensive — not strictly classical perhaps, nor quite new, nor did it contain any one garment made precisely after the fashion of any age or time, but everything was more or less spangled; and what *can* be prettier than spangles! It may be objected that they are not adapted to the daylight, but everybody knows that they would glitter if there were lamps; and nothing can be clearer than that if people give fancy balls in the daytime, and the dresses do not show quite as well as they would by night, the fault lies solely with the people who give the

fancy balls, and is in no wise chargeable on the spangles. Such was the convincing reasoning of Mr. Solomon Lucas; and influenced by such arguments did Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass engage to array themselves in costumes which his taste and experience induced him to recommend as admirably suited to the occasion.

A carriage was hired from the Town Arms, for the accommodation of the Pickwickians, and a chariot was ordered from the same repository, for the purpose of conveying Mr. and Mrs. Pott to Mrs. Leo Hunter's grounds, which Mr. Pott, as a delicate acknowledgment of having received an invitation, had already confidently predicted in the Eatanswill Gazette "would present a scene of varied and delicious enchantment — a bewildering coruscation of beauty and talent — a lavish and prodigal display of hospitality — above all, a degree of splendor softened by the most exquisite taste; and adornment refined with perfect harmony and the chastest good-keeping — compared with which, the fabled gorgeousness of Eastern Fairy Land itself, would appear to be clothed in as many dark and murky colors, as must be the mind of the splenetic and unmanly being who could presume to taint with the venom of his envy, the preparations making by the virtuous and highly distinguished lady, at whose shrine this humble tribute of admiration was offered."

This last was a piece of biting sarcasm against the Independent, who in consequence of not having been invited at all, had been through four numbers affecting to sneer at the whole affair, in his very largest type, with all the adjectives in capital letters.

The morning came; it was a pleasant sight to behold Mr. Tupman in full Brigand's costume, with a very tight jacket, sitting like a pincushion over his back and shoul-

ders: the upper portion of his legs encased in the velvet shorts, and the lower part thereof swathed in the complicated bandages to which all Brigands are peculiarly attached. It was pleasing to see his open and ingenuous countenance, well mustachioed and corked, looking out from an open shirt collar; and to contemplate the sugar-loaf hat, decorated with ribbons of all colors, which he was compelled to carry on his knee, inasmuch as no known conveyance with a top to it, would admit of any man's carrying it between his head and the roof. Equally humorous and agreeable, was the appearance of Mr. Snodgrass in blue satin trunks and cloak, white silk tights and shoes, and Grecian helmet: which everybody knows (and if they do not, Mr. Solomon Lucas did) to have been the regular, authentic, every-day costume of a Troubadour, from the earliest ages down to the time of their final disappearance from the face of the earth. All this was pleasant, but this was as nothing compared with the shouting of the populace when the carriage drew up, behind Mr. Pott's chariot, which chariot itself drew up at Mr. Pott's door, which door itself opened, and displayed the great Pott accoutred as a Russian officer of justice, with a tremendous knout in his hand — tastefully typical of the stern and mighty power of the Eatanswill Gazette, and the fearful lashings it bestowed on public offenders.

“Bravo!” shouted Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass from the passage, when they beheld the walking allegory.

“Bravo!” Mr. Pickwick was heard to exclaim from the passage.

“Hoo — roar Pott!” shouted the populace. Amid these salutations, Mr. Pott, smiling with that kind of



bland dignity which sufficiently testified that he felt his power, and knew how to exert it, got into the chariot.

Then there emerged from the house, Mrs. Pott, who would have looked very like Apollo if she hadn't had a gown on: conducted by Mr. Winkle, who in his light-red coat, could not possibly have been mistaken for anything but a sportsman, if he had not borne an equal resemblance to a general postman. Last of all came Mr. Pickwick, whom the boys applauded as loudly as anybody, probably under the impression that his tights and gaiters were some remnants of the dark ages; and then the two vehicles proceeded towards Mrs. Leo Hunter's: Mr. Weller (who was to assist in waiting) being stationed on the box of that in which his master was seated.

Every one of the men, women, boys, girls, and babies, who were assembled to see the visitors in their fancy dresses, screamed with delight and ecstasy, when Mr. Pickwick, with the Brigand on one arm, and the Troubadour on the other, walked solemnly up the entrance. Never were such shouts heard as those which greeted Mr. Tupman's efforts to fix the sugar-loaf hat on his head, by way of entering the garden in style.

The preparations were on the most delightful scale; fully realizing the prophetic Pott's anticipations about the gorgeousness of Eastern Fairy-land, and at once affording a sufficient contradiction to the malignant statements of the reptile Independent. The grounds were more than an acre and a quarter in extent, and they were filled with people! Never was such a blaze of beauty, and fashion, and literature. There was the young lady who "did" the poetry in the Eatanswill Gazette, in the garb of a sultana, leaning upon the arm of the young gentleman who "did" the review department,

and who was appropriately habited in a field-marshal's uniform—the boots excepted. There were hosts of these geniuses, and any reasonable person would have thought it honor enough to meet them. But more than these, there were half a dozen lions from London — authors, real authors, who had written whole books, and printed them afterwards—and here you might see 'em, walking about, like ordinary men, smiling, and talking — ay, and talking pretty considerable nonsense too, no doubt with the benign intention of rendering themselves intelligible to the common people about them. Moreover, there was a band of music in pasteboard caps; four something-can singers in the costume of their country, and a dozen hired waiters in the costume of *their* country — and very dirty costume too. And above all, there was Mrs. Leo Hunter in the character of Minerva, receiving the company, and overflowing with pride and gratification at the notion of having called such distinguished individuals together.

“Mr. Pickwick, ma'am,” said a servant, as that gentleman approached the presiding goddess, with his hat in his hand, and the Brigand and Troubadour on either arm.

“What! Where!” exclaimed Mrs. Leo Hunter, starting up, in an affected rapture of surprise.

“Here,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Is it possible that I have really the gratification of beholding Mr. Pickwick himself!” ejaculated Mrs. Leo Hunter.

“No other, ma'am,” replied Mr. Pickwick, bowing very low. “Permit me to introduce my friends — Mr. Tupman — Mr. Winkle — Mr. Snodgrass — to the authoress of ‘The Expiring Frog.’”

Very few people but those who have tried it, know what a difficult process it is to bow in green velvet smalls, and a tight jacket, and high-crowned hat: or in blue satin trunks and white silks: or knee-cords and top-boots that were never made for the wearer, and have been fixed upon him without the remotest reference to the comparative dimensions of himself and the suit. Never were such distortions as Mr. Tupman's frame underwent in his efforts to appear easy and graceful—never was such ingenious posturing, as his fancy-dressed friends exhibited.

“Mr. Pickwick,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter, “I must make you promise not to stir from my side the whole day. There are hundreds of people here, that I must positively introduce you to.”

“You are very kind, ma'am,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“In the first place, here are my little girls; I had almost forgotten them,” said Minerva, carelessly pointing towards a couple of full-grown young ladies, of whom one might be about twenty, and the other a year or two older, and who were dressed in very juvenile costumes—whether to make them look young, or their mamma younger, Mr. Pickwick does not distinctly inform us.

“They are very beautiful,” said Mr. Pickwick, as the juveniles turned away, after being presented.

“They are very like their mamma, sir,” said Mr. Pott, majestically.

“Oh you naughty man,” exclaimed Mrs. Leo Hunter, playfully tapping the Editor's arm with her fan. (Minerva with a fan!)

“Why now, my dear Mrs. Hunter,” said Mr. Pott, who was trumpeter in ordinary at the Den, “you *know* that when your picture was in the Exhibition of the

Royal Academy, last year, everybody inquired whether it was intended for you, or your youngest daughter; for you were so much alike that there was no telling the difference between you."

"Well, and if they did, why need you repeat it before strangers?" said Mrs. Leo Hunter, bestowing another tap on the slumbering lion of the Eatanswill Gazette.

"Count, Count," screamed Mrs. Leo Hunter to a well whiskered individual in a foreign uniform, who was passing by.

"Ah! you want me?" said the Count, turning back.

"I want to introduce two very clever people to each other," said Mrs. Leo Hunter. "Mr. Pickwick, I have great pleasure in introducing you to Count Smorltork." She added in a hurried whisper to Mr. Pickwick — "the famous foreigner — gathering materials for his great work on England — hem! — Count Smorltork, Mr. Pickwick."

Mr. Pickwick saluted the Count with all the reverence due to so great a man, and the Count drew forth a set of tablets.

"What you say, Mrs. Hunt?" inquired the Count, smiling graciously on the gratified Mrs. Leo Hunter, "Pig Vig or Big Vig — what you call — Lawyer — eh? I see — that is it. Big Vig" — and the Count was proceeding to enter Mr. Pickwick in his tablets, as a gentleman of the long-robe, who derived his name from the profession to which he belonged, when Mrs. Leo Hunter interposed.

"No, no, Count," said the lady, "Pick-wick."

"Ah, ah, I see," replied the Count. "Peek — Christian name; Weeks — surname; good, ver good. Peek Weeks. How you do, Weeks?"

“Quite well, I thank you,” replied Mr. Pickwick, with all his usual affability. “Have you been long in England?”

“Long — ver long time — fortnight — more.”

“Do you stay here long?”

“One week.”

“You will have enough to do,” said Mr. Pickwick, smiling, “to gather all the materials you want, in that time.”

“Eh, they are gathered,” said the Count.

“Indeed!” said Mr. Pickwick.

“They are here,” added the Count, tapping his forehead significantly. “Large book at home — full of notes — music, picture, science, potry, poltic; all tings.”

“The word politics, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, “comprises, in itself, a difficult study of no inconsiderable magnitude.”

“Ah!” said the Count, drawing out the tablets again, “ver good — fine words to begin a chapter. Chapter forty-seven. Poltics. The word poltic surprises by himself” — And down went Mr. Pickwick’s remark, in Count Smorltork’s tablets, with such variations and additions as the Count’s exuberant fancy suggested, or his imperfect knowledge of the language occasioned.

“Count,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

“Mrs. Hunt,” replied the Count.

“This is Mr. Snodgrass, a friend of Mr. Pickwick’s, and a poet.”

“Stop,” exclaimed the Count, bringing out the tablets once more. “Head, potry — chapter, literary friends — name, Snowgrass; ver good. Introduced to Snowgrass — great poet, friend of Peek Weeks — by Mrs.

Hunt, which wrote other sweet poem — what is that name? — Fog — Perspiring Fog — ver good — ver good indeed.” And the Count put up his tablets, and with sundry bows and acknowledgments walked away, thoroughly satisfied that he had made the most important and valuable additions to his stock of information.

“Wonderful man, Count Smorltork,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

“Sound Philosopher,” said Pott.

“Clear-headed, strong-minded person,” added Mr. Snodgrass.

A chorus of by-standers took up the shout of Count Smorltork’s praise, shook their heads sagely, and unanimously cried “Very !”

As the enthusiasm in Count Smorltork’s favor ran very high, his praises might have been sung until the end of the festivities, if the four something-ean singers had not ranged themselves in front of a small apple-tree, to look picturesque, and commenced singing their national songs, which appeared by no means difficult of execution, inasmuch as the grand secret seemed to be, that three of the something-ean singers should grunt, while the fourth howled. This interesting performance having concluded amidst the loud plaudits of the whole company, a boy forthwith proceeded to entangle himself with the rails of a chair, and to jump over it, and crawl under it, and fall down with it, and do everything but sit upon it, and then to make a cravat of his legs, and tie them round his neck, and then to illustrate the ease with which a human being can be made to look like a magnified toad — all which feats yielded high delight and satisfaction to the assembled spectators. After which the voice of Mrs. Pott was heard to chirp faintly forth, something which

courtesy interpreted into a song, which was all very classical, and strictly in character, because Apollo was himself a composer, and composers can very seldom sing their own music or anybody else's, either. This was succeeded by Mrs. Leo Hunter's recitation of her far-famed ode to an Expiring Frog, which was encored once, and would have been encored twice, if the major part of the guests, who thought it was high time to get something to eat, had not said that it was perfectly shameful to take advantage of Mrs. Hunter's good nature. So, although Mrs. Leo Hunter professed her perfect willingness to recite the ode again, her kind and considerate friends wouldn't hear of it on any account; and the refreshment room being thrown open, all the people who had ever been there before, scrambled in with all possible despatch: Mrs. Leo Hunter's usual course of proceeding being, to issue cards for a hundred, and breakfast for fifty, or in other words to feed only the very particular lions, and let the smaller animals take care of themselves.

"Where is Mr. Pott?" said Mrs. Leo Hunter, as she placed the aforesaid lions around her.

"Here I am," said the Editor, from the remotest end of the room; far beyond all hope of food, unless something was done for him by the hostess.

"Won't you come up here?"

"Oh pray don't mind him," said Mrs. Pott, in the most obliging voice — "you give yourself a great deal of unnecessary trouble, Mrs. Hunter. You'll do very well there, won't you — dear?"

"Certainly — love," replied the unhappy Pott, with a grim smile. Alas for the knout! The nervous arm that wielded it, with such gigantic force, on public char-

acters, was paralyzed beneath the glance of the imperious Mrs. Pott.

Mrs. Leo Hunter looked round her in triumph. Count Smorltork was busily engaged in taking notes of the contents of the dishes; Mr. Tupman was doing the honors of the lobster salad to several lionesses, with a degree of grace which no Brigand ever exhibited before; Mr. Snodgrass having cut out the young gentleman who cut up the books for the Eatanswill Gazette, was engaged in an impassioned argument with the young lady who did the poetry: and Mr. Pickwick was making himself universally agreeable. Nothing seemed wanting to render the select circle complete, when Mr. Leo Hunter — whose department on these occasions was to stand about in door-ways and talk to the less important people — suddenly called out, —

“My dear; here’s Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter, “how anxiously I have been expecting him. Pray make room, to let Mr. Fitz-Marshall pass. Tell Mr. Fitz-Marshall, my dear, to come up to me directly, to be scolded for coming so late.”

“Coming, my dear ma’am,” cried a voice, “as quick as I can — crowds of people — full room — hard work — very.”

Mr. Pickwick’s knife and fork fell from his hand. He stared across the table at Mr. Tupman, who had dropped *his* knife and fork, and was looking as if he were about to sink into the ground without further notice.

“Ah!” cried the voice, as its owner pushed his way among the last five-and-twenty Turks, officers, cavaliers, and Charles the Seconds, that remained between him and the table, “regular mangle — Baker’s patent — not a crease in my coat, after all this squeezing — might have



‘got up my linen’ as I came along — ha! ha! not a bad idea, that — queer thing to have it mangled when it’s upon one, though — trying process — very.”

With these broken words, a young man dressed as a naval officer made his way up to the table, and presented to the astonished Pickwickians the identical form and features of Mr. Alfred Jingle.

The offender had barely time to take Mrs. Leo Hunter’s proffered hand, when his eyes encountered the indignant orbs of Mr. Pickwick.

“Hallo!” said Jingle. “Quite forgot — no directions to postilion — give ’em at once — back in a minute.”

“The servant, or Mr. Hunter will do it in a moment, Mr. Fitz-Marshall,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter.

“No, no — I’ll do it — shan’t be long — back in no time,” replied Jingle. With these words he disappeared among the crowd.

“Will you allow me to ask you, ma’am,” said the excited Mr. Pickwick, rising from his seat, “who that young man is, and where he resides!”

“He is a gentleman of fortune, Mr. Pickwick,” said Mrs. Leo Hunter, “to whom I very much want to introduce you. The Count will be delighted with him.”

“Yes, yes,” said Mr. Pickwick, hastily. “His residence” —

“Is at present at the Angel at Bury.”

“At Bury?”

“At Bury St. Edmunds, not many miles from here. But dear me, Mr. Pickwick, you are not going to leave us: surely Mr. Pickwick you cannot think of going so soon.”

But long before Mrs. Leo Hunter had finished speaking, Mr. Pickwick had plunged through the throng, and

reached the garden, whither he was shortly afterwards joined by Mr. Tupman, who had followed his friend closely.

"It's of no use," said Mr. Tupman. "He has gone."

"I know it," said Mr. Pickwick, "and I will follow him."

"Follow him! Where?" inquired Mr. Tupman.

"To the Angel at Bury," replied Mr. Pickwick, speaking very quickly. "How do we know whom he is deceiving there? He deceived a worthy man once, and we were the innocent cause. He shall not do it again, if I can help it; I'll expose him. Sam! Where's my servant?"

"Here you are, sir," said Mr. Weller, emerging from a sequestered spot, where he had been engaged in discussing a bottle of Madeira, which he had abstracted from the breakfast-table, an hour or two before. "Here's your servant, sir. Proud o' the title, as the Living Skelinton said, ven they show'd him."

"Follow me instantly," said Mr. Pickwick. "Tupman, if I stay at Bury, you can join me there, when I write. Till then, good-by!"

Remonstrances were useless. Mr. Pickwick was roused, and his mind was made up. Mr. Tupman returned to his companions; and in another hour had drowned all present recollection of Mr. Alfred Jingle, or Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall, in an exhilarating quadrille and a bottle of champagne. By that time, Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, perched on the outside of a stage-coach, were every succeeding minute placing a less and less distance between themselves and the good old town of Bury St. Edmunds.

## CHAPTER XVI.

TOO FULL OF ADVENTURE TO BE BRIEFLY DESCRIBED.

THERE is no month in the whole year, in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charms of this time of year are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers—when the recollection of snow, and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our minds as completely as they have disappeared from the earth,—and yet what a pleasant time it is! Orchards and cornfields ring with the hum of labor; trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground; and the corn, piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every light breath that sweeps above it, as if it wooed the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very wagon, whose slow motion across the well-reaped field, is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.

As the coach rolls swiftly past the fields and orchards which skirt the road, groups of women and children,

piling the fruit in sieves, or gathering the scattered ears of corn, pause for an instant from their labor, and shading the sunburnt face with a still browner hand, gaze upon the passengers with curious eyes, while some stout urchin, too small to work, but too mischievous to be left at home, scrambles over the side of the basket in which he has been deposited for security, and kicks and screams with delight. The reaper stops in his work, and stands with folded arms, looking at the vehicle as it whirls past; and the rough cart-horses bestow a sleepy glance upon the smart coach team, which says, as plainly as a horse's glance can, "It's all very fine to look at, but slow going, over a heavy field, is better than warm work like that, upon a dusty road, after all." You cast a look behind you, as you turn a corner of the road. The women and children have resumed their labor: the reaper once more stoops to his work: the cart-horses have moved on: and all are again in motion.

The influence of a scene like this was not lost upon the well regulated mind of Mr. Pickwick. Intent upon the resolution he had formed, of exposing the real character of the nefarious Jingle, in any quarter in which he might be pursuing his fraudulent designs, he sat at first taciturn and contemplative, brooding over the means by which his purpose could be best attained. By degrees his attention grew more and more attracted by the objects around him; and at last he derived as much enjoyment from the ride as if it had been undertaken for the pleasantest reason in the world.

"Delightful prospect, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Beats the chimley pots, sir," replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat.

"I suppose you have hardly seen anything but chim-

ney-pots and bricks and mortar, all your life, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, smiling.

"I worn't always a boots, sir," said Mr. Weller, with a shake of the head. "I was a wagginer's boy, once."

"When was that?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"When I was first pitched neck and crop into the world to play at leap-frog with its troubles," replied Sam. "I was a carrier's boy at startin': then a wagginer's, then a helper, then a boots. Now I'm a gen'l'm'n's servant. I shall be a gen'l'm'n myself one of these days, perhaps, with a pipe in my mouth, and a summer-house in the back garden. Who knows? I shouldn't be surprised, for one."

"You are quite a philosopher, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"It runs in the family, I b'lieve, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "My father's wery much in that line, now. If my mother-in-law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion, and breaks his pipe; he steps out, and gets another. Then she screams wery loud, and falls into 'sterics; and he smokes wery comfortably till she comes to agin. That's philosophy, sir, a'n't it?"

"A very good substitute for it, at all events," replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing. "It must have been of great service to you, in the course of your rambling life, Sam."

"Service, sir," exclaimed Sam. "You may say that. Arter I run away from the carrier, and afore I took up with the wagginer, I had unfurnished lodgin's for a fortnight."

"Unfurnished lodgings?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes — the dry arches of Waterloo Bridge. Fine sleeping-place — within ten minutes' walk of all the public offices — only if there is any objection to it, it is that the sitivation's *rayther* too airy. I see some queer sights ther."

“Ah, I suppose you did,” said Mr. Pickwick, with an air of considerable interest.

“Sights, sir,” resumed Mr. Weller, “as ’ud penetrate your benevolent heart, and come out on the other side. You don’t see the reg’lar wagrants there; trust ’em, they knows better than that. Young beggars, male and female, as hasn’t made a rise in their profession, takes up their quarters there sometimes; but it’s generally the worn-out, starving, houseless creetur’s as rolls themselves in the dark corners o’ them lonesome places—poor creetur’s as a’n’t up to the twopenny rope.”

“And pray, Sam, what is the twopenny rope?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“The twopenny rope, sir,” replied Mr. Weller, “is just a cheap lodgin’-house, where the beds is twopence a night.”

“What do they call a bed a rope for?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Bless your innocence, sir, that a’n’t it” replied Sam. “Wen the lady and gen’l’m’n as keeps the Hot-el, first begun business, they used to make the beds on the floor; but this wouldn’t do at no price, ’cos instead o’ taking a moderate twopenn’orth o’ sleep, the lodgers used to lie there, half the day. So now they has two ropes, ’bout six foot apart, and thlree from the floor, which goes right down the room; and the beds are made of slips of coarse sacking, stretched across ’em.”

“Well,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Well,” said Mr. Weller, “the adwantage o’ the plan’s hobvious. At six o’clock every mornin’, they lets go the ropes at one end, and down falls all the lodgers. ’Consequence is, that being thoroughly waked, they get up wery quietly, and walk away! Beg your pardon, sir,”

said Sam, suddenly breaking off in his loquacious discourse. "Is this Bury St. Edmunds?"

"It is," replied Mr. Pickwick.

The coach rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving and cleanly appearance, and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey.

"And this," said Mr. Pickwick, looking up, "is the Angel! We alight here, Sam. But some caution is necessary. Order a private room, and do not mention my name. You understand."

"Right as a trivet, sir," replied Mr. Weller, with a wink of intelligence; and having dragged Mr. Pickwick's portmanteau from the hind boot, into which it had been hastily thrown when they joined the coach at Eatonswill, Mr. Weller disappeared on his errand. A private room was speedily engaged; and into it Mr. Pickwick was ushered without delay.

"Now, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, "the first thing to be done is to" —

"Order dinner, sir," interposed Mr. Weller. "It's wery late, sir."

"Ah, so it is," said Mr. Pickwick, looking at his watch. "You are right, Sam."

"And if I might advise, sir," added Mr. Weller, "I'd just have a good night's rest arterwards, and not begin inquiring arter this here deep 'un till the mornin'. There's nothin' so refreshin' as sleep, sir, as the servant-girl said afore she drank the egg-cup-full o' laudanum."

"I think you are right, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick. "But I must first ascertain that he is in the house, and not likely to go away."

"Leave that to me, sir," said Sam. "Let me order

you a snug little dinner, and make my inquiries below while it's a-getting ready ; I could worm ev'ry secret out o' the boots's heart, in five minutes, sir."

"Do so," said Mr. Pickwick : and Mr. Weller at once retired.

In half an hour, Mr. Pickwick was seated at a very satisfactory dinner ; and in three quarters Mr. Weller returned with the intelligence that Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall had ordered his private room to be retained for him, until further notice. He was going to spend the evening at some private house in the neighborhood, had ordered the boots to sit up until his return, and had taken his servant with him.

"Now, sir," argued Mr. Weller, when he had concluded his report, "if I can get a talk with this here servant in the mornin', he'll tell me all his master's concerns."

"How do you know that?" interposed Mr. Pickwick.

"Bless your heart, sir, servants always do," replied Mr. Weller.

"Oh, ah, I forgot that," said Mr. Pickwick. "Well."

"Then you can arrange what's best to be done, sir, and we can act according."

As it appeared that this was the best arrangement that could be made, it was finally agreed upon. Mr. Weller, by his master's permission, retired to spend the evening in his own way ; and was shortly afterwards elected, by the unanimous voice of the assembled company, into the tap-room chair, in which honorable post he acquitted himself so much to the satisfaction of the gentlemen-frequenter, that their roars of laughter and approbation penetrated to Mr. Pickwick's bedroom, and shortened the term of his natural rest, by at least three hours.



Early on the ensuing morning, Mr. Weller was dispelling all the feverish remains of the previous evening's conviviality, through the instrumentality of a halfpenny shower-bath (having induced a young gentleman attached to the stable-department, by the offer of that coin, to pump over his head and face, until he was perfectly restored), when he was attracted by the appearance of a young fellow in mulberry-colored livery, who was sitting on a bench in the yard, reading what appeared to be a hymn-book, with an air of deep abstraction, but who occasionally stole a glance at the individual under the pump, as if he took some interest in his proceedings, nevertheless.

"You're a rum 'un to look at, you are!" thought Mr. Weller, the first time his eyes encountered the glance of the stranger in the mulberry-colored suit: who had a large, sallow, ugly face, very sunken eyes, and a gigantic head, from which depended a quantity of lank black hair. "You're a rum 'un!" thought Mr. Weller; and thinking this, he went on washing himself, and thought no more about him.

Still the man kept glancing from his hymn-book to Sam, and from Sam to his hymn-book, as if he wanted to open a conversation. So at last, Sam, by way of giving him an opportunity, said, with a familiar nod —

"How are you, governor?"

"I am happy to say, I am pretty well, sir," said the man, speaking with great deliberation, and closing the book. "I hope you are the same, sir?"

"Why, if I felt less like a walking brandy-bottle, I shouldn't be quite so staggy this mornin'," replied Sam. "Are you stoppin' in this house, old 'un?"

The mulberry man replied in the affirmative.

“How was it, you worn’t one of us, last night?” inquired Sam, scrubbing his face with the towel. “You seem one of the jolly sort — looks as convivial as a live trout in a lime-basket,” added Mr. Weller, in an undertone.

“I was out last night with my master,” replied the stranger.

“What’s his name?” inquired Mr. Weller, coloring up very red with sudden excitement, and the friction of the towel combined.

“Fitz-Marshall,” said the mulberry man.

“Give us your hand,” said Mr. Weller, advancing; “I should like to know you. I like your appearance, old fellow.”

“Well, that is very strange,” said the mulberry man, with great simplicity of manner. “I like yours so much, that I wanted to speak to you from the very first moment I saw you under the pump.”

“Did you though?”

“Upon my word. Now, isn’t that curious?”

“Wery sing’ler,” said Sam, inwardly congratulating himself upon the softness of the stranger. “What’s your name, my patriarch?”

“Job.”

“And a wery good name it is — only one I know, that a’n’t got a nickname to it. What’s the other name?”

“Trotter,” said the stranger. “What is yours?”

Sam bore in mind his master’s caution, and replied,

“My name’s Walker; my master’s name’s Wilkins. Will you take a drop o’ somethin’ this mornin’, Mr. Trotter?”

Mr. Trotter acquiesced in this agreeable proposal:

and having deposited his book in his coat-pocket, accompanied Mr. Weller to the tap, where they were soon occupied in discussing an exhilarating compound, formed by mixing together, in a pewter vessel, certain quantities of British Hollands, and the fragrant essence of the clove.

“And what sort of a place have you got?” inquired Sam, as he filled his companion’s glass, for the second time.

“Bad,” said Job, smacking his lips, “very bad.”

“You don’t mean that?” said Sam.

“I do, indeed. Worse than that, my master’s going to be married.”

“No.”

“Yes; and worse than that, too, he’s going to run away with an immense rich heiress, from boarding-school.”

“What a dragon!” said Sam, refilling his companion’s glass. “It’s some boarding-school in this town, I suppose, a’n’t it?”

Now, although this question was put in the most careless tone imaginable, Mr. Job Trotter plainly showed, by gestures, that he perceived his new friend’s anxiety to draw forth an answer to it. He emptied his glass, looked mysteriously at his companion, winked both of his small eyes, one after the other, and finally made a motion with his arm, as if he were working an imaginary pump-handle: thereby intimating that he (Mr. Trotter) considered himself as undergoing the process of being pumped, by Mr. Samuel Weller.

“No, no,” said Mr. Trotter, in conclusion, “that’s not to be told to everybody. That is a secret — a great secret, Mr. Walker.”

As the mulberry man said this, he turned his glass

upside down, as a means of reminding his companion that he had nothing left wherewith to slake his thirst. Sam observed the hint; and feeling the delicate manner in which it was conveyed, ordered the pewter vessel to be refilled, whereat the small eyes of the mulberry man glistened.

"And so it's a secret?" said Sam.

"I should rather suspect it was," said the mulberry man, sipping his liquor, with a complacent face.

"I suppose your mas'r's wery rich?" said Sam.

Mr. Trotter smiled, and holding his glass in his left hand, gave four distinct slaps on the pocket of his mulberry indescribables with his right, as if to intimate that his master might have done the same without alarming anybody much, by the chinking of coin.

"Ah," said Sam, "that's the game, is it?"

The mulberry man nodded significantly.

"Well, and don't you think, old feller," remonstrated Mr. Weller, "that if you let your master take in this here young lady, you're a precious rascal?"

"I know that," said Job Trotter, turning upon his companion a countenance of deep contrition, and groaning slightly. "I know that and that's what it is that preys upon my mind. But what am I to do?"

"Do!" said Sam; "di-wulge to the missis, and give up your master."

"Who'd believe me?" replied Job Trotter. "The young lady's considered the very picture of innocence and discretion. She'd deny it, and so would my master. Who'd believe me? I should lose my place, and get indicted for a conspiracy, or some such thing; that's all I should take by my motion."

"There's somethin' in that," said Sam, ruminating; "there's somethin' in that."

“If I knew any respectable gentleman who would take the matter up,” continued Mr. Trotter, “I might have some hope of preventing the elopement; but there’s the same difficulty, Mr. Walker, just the same. I know no gentleman in this strange place; and ten to one if I did, whether he would believe my story.”

“Come this way,” said Sam, suddenly jumping up, and grasping the mulberry man by the arm. “My mas’r’s the man you want, I see.” And after a slight resistance on the part of Job Trotter, Sam led his newly found friend to the apartment of Mr. Pickwick, to whom he presented him, together with a brief summary of the dialogue we have just repeated.

“I am very sorry to betray my master, sir,” said Job Trotter, applying to his eyes a pink checked pocket handkerchief about six inches square.

“The feeling does you a great deal of honor,” replied Mr. Pickwick; “but it is your duty, nevertheless.”

“I know it is my duty, sir,” replied Job, with great emotion. “We should all try to discharge our duty, sir; and I humbly endeavor to discharge mine, sir; but it is a hard trial to betray a master, sir, whose clothes you wear, and whose bread you eat, even though he is a scoundrel, sir.”

“You are a very good fellow,” said Mr. Pickwick, much affected, “an honest fellow.”

“Come, come,” interposed Sam, who had witnessed Mr. Trotter’s tears with considerable impatience, “blow this here water-cart bis’ness. It won’t do no good, this won’t.”

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, reproachfully, “I am sorry to find that you have so little respect for this young man’s feelings.”

“His feelin’s is all wery well, sir,” replied Mr. Weller; “and as they’re so wery fine, and it’s a pity he should lose ’em, I think he’d better keep ’em in his own buz-zum, than let ’em ewaporate in hot water, ’specially as they do no good. Tears never yet wound up a clock, or worked a steam ingen’. The next time you go out to a smoking party, young feller, fill your pipe with that ’ere reflection, and for the present, just put that bit of pink gingham into your pocket. ’Ta’n’t so handsome that you need keep waving it about, as if you was a tight-rope dancer.”

“My man is in the right,” said Mr. Pickwick, accosting Job, “although his mode of expressing his opinion is somewhat homely, and occasionally incomprehensible.”

“He is, sir, very right,” said Mr. Trotter, “and I will give way no longer.”

“Very well,” said Mr. Pickwick. “Now, where is this boarding-school?”

“It is a large, old, red-brick house, just outside the town, sir,” replied Job Trotter.

“And when,” said Mr. Pickwick, “when is this villainous design to be carried into execution — when is this elopement to take place?”

“To-night, sir,” replied Job.

“To-night!” exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

“This very night, sir,” replied Job Trotter. “That is what alarms me so much.”

“Instant measures must be taken,” said Mr. Pickwick. “I will see the lady who keeps the establishment immediately.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Job, “but that course of proceeding will never do.”

“Why not?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“My master, sir, is a very artful man.”

“I know he is,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“And he has so wound himself round the old lady’s heart, sir,” resumed Job, “that she would believe nothing to his prejudice, if you went down on your bare knees, and swore it, especially as you have no proof but the word of a servant, who, for anything she knows (and my master would be sure to say so), was discharged for some fault, and does this in revenge.”

“What had better be done, then?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Nothing but taking him in the very fact of eloping, will convince the old lady, sir,” replied Job.

“All them old cats *will* run their heads ag’in’ mile-stones,” observed Mr. Weller in a parenthesis.

“But this taking him in the very act of elopement, would be a very difficult thing to accomplish, I fear,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“I don’t know, sir,” said Mr. Trotter, after a few moments’ reflection. “I think it might be very easily done.”

“How?” was Mr. Pickwick’s inquiry.

“Why,” replied Mr. Trotter, “my master and I, being in the confidence of the two servants, will be secreted in the kitchen at ten o’clock. When the family have retired to rest, we shall come out of the kitchen, and the young lady out of her bedroom. A post-chaise will be waiting, and away we go.”

“Well,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Well, sir, I have been thinking that if you were in waiting in the garden behind, alone” —

“Alone,” said Mr. Pickwick. “Why alone?”

“I thought it very natural,” replied Job, “that the old lady wouldn’t like such an unpleasant discovery to be made before more persons than can possibly be helped. The young lady too, sir — consider her feelings.”

“You are very right,” said Mr. Pickwick. “The consideration evinces your delicacy of feeling. Go on; you are very right.”

“Well, sir, I was thinking that if you were waiting in the back garden alone, and I was to let you in, at the door which opens into it, from the end of the passage, at exactly half-past eleven o’clock, you would be just in the very moment of time, to assist me in frustrating the designs of this bad man, by whom I have been unfortunately ensnared.” Here Mr. Trotter sighed deeply.

“Don’t distress yourself on that account,” said Mr. Pickwick, “if he had one grain of the delicacy of feeling which distinguishes you, humble as your station is, I should have some hopes of him.”

Job Trotter bowed low; and in spite of Mr. Weller’s previous remonstrance, the tears again rose to his eyes.

“I never see such a feller,” said Sam. “Blessed if I don’t think he’s got a main in his head as is always turned on.”

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, with great severity. “Hold your tongue.”

“Wery well, sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“I don’t like this plan,” said Mr. Pickwick, after deep meditation. “Why cannot I communicate with the young lady’s friends?”

“Because they live one hundred miles from here, sir,” responded Job Trotter.



“That’s a clincher,” said Mr. Weller, aside.

“Then this garden,” resumed Mr. Pickwick. “How am I to get into it?”

“The wall is very low, sir, and your servant will give you a leg up.”

“My servant will give me a leg up,” repeated Mr. Pickwick, mechanically. “You will be sure to be near this door, that you speak of?”

“You cannot mistake it, sir; it’s the only one that opens into the garden. Tap at it, when you hear the clock strike, and I will open it instantly.”

“I don’t like the plan,” said Mr. Pickwick; “but as I see no other, and as the happiness of this young lady’s whole life is at stake, I adopt it. I shall be sure to be there.”

Thus, for the second time, did Mr. Pickwick’s innate good-feeling involve him in an enterprise, from which he would most willingly have stood aloof.

“What is the name of the house?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“Westgate House, sir. You turn a little to the right when you get to the end of the town; it stands by itself, some little distance off the high road, with the name on a brass plate on the gate.”

“I know it,” said Mr. Pickwick. “I observed it once before, when I was in this town. You may depend upon me.”

Mr. Trotter made another bow, and turned to depart, when Mr. Pickwick thrust a guinea into his hand.

“You’re a fine fellow,” said Mr. Pickwick, “and I admire your goodness of heart. No thanks. Remember — eleven o’clock.”

“There is no fear of my forgetting it, sir,” replied Job

Trotter. With these words he left the room, followed by Sam.

“I say,” said the latter, “not a bad notion that ’ere crying. I’d cry like a rain-water spout in a shower, on such good terms. How do you do it?”

“It comes from the heart, Mr. Walker,” replied Job solemnly. “Good-morning, sir.”

“You’re a soft customer, you are; — we’ve got it all out o’ you, anyhow,” thought Mr. Weller, as Job walked away.

We cannot state the precise nature of the thoughts which passed through Mr. Trotter’s mind, because we don’t know what they were.

The day wore on, evening came, and at a little before ten o’clock Sam Weller reported that Mr. Jingle and Job had gone out together, that their luggage was packed up, and that they had ordered a chaise. The plot was evidently in execution, as Mr. Trotter had foretold.

Half-past ten o’clock arrived, and it was time for Mr. Pickwick to issue forth on his delicate errand. Resisting Sam’s tender of his great coat, in order that he might have no incumbrance in scaling the wall, he set forth, followed by his attendant.

There was a bright moon, but it was behind the clouds. It was a fine dry night, but it was most uncommonly dark. Paths, hedges, fields, houses, and trees, were enveloped in one deep shade. The atmosphere was hot and sultry, the summer lightning quivered faintly on the verge of the horizon, and was the only sight that varied the dull gloom in which everything was wrapped — sound there was none, except the distant barking of some restless house-dog.

They found the house, read the brass plate, walked round the wall, and stopped at that portion of it which divided them from the bottom of the garden.

"You will return to the inn, Sam, when you have assisted me over," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Wery well, sir."

"And you will sit up, till I return."

"Cert'nly, sir."

"Take hold of my leg; and, when I say 'Over,' raise me gently."

"All right, sir."

Having settled these preliminaries, Mr. Pickwick grasped the top of the wall, and gave the word "Over," which was very literally obeyed. Whether his body partook in some degree of the elasticity of his mind, or whether Mr. Weller's notions of a gentle push were of a somewhat rougher description than Mr. Pickwick's, the immediate effect of his assistance was to jerk that immortal gentleman completely over the wall on to the bed beneath, where, after crushing three gooseberry bushes and a rose-tree, he finally alighted at full length.

"You ha'n't hurt yourself, I hope, sir," said Sam, in a loud whisper, as soon as he recovered from the surprise consequent upon the mysterious disappearance of his master.

"I have not hurt *myself*, Sam, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, from the other side of the wall, "but I rather think that *you* have hurt me."

"I hope not, sir," said Sam.

"Never mind," said Mr. Pickwick, rising, "it's nothing but a few scratches. Go away, or we shall be overheard."

"Good-by, sir."

“ Good-by.”

With stealthy steps Sam Weller departed, leaving Mr. Pickwick alone in the garden.

Lights occasionally appeared in the different windows of the house, or glanced from the staircases, as if the inmates were retiring to rest. Not caring to go too near the door, until the appointed time, Mr. Pickwick crouched into an angle of the wall, and awaited its arrival.

It was a situation which might well have depressed the spirits of many a man. Mr. Pickwick, however, felt neither depression nor misgiving. He knew that his purpose was in the main a good one, and he placed implicit reliance on the high-minded Job. It was dull, certainly; not to say, dreary; but a contemplative man can always employ himself in meditation. Mr. Pickwick had meditated himself into a doze, when he was roused by the chimes of the neighboring church ringing out the hour — half-past eleven.

“ That is the time,” thought Mr. Pickwick, getting cautiously on his feet. He looked up at the house. The lights had disappeared, and the shutters were closed — all in bed, no doubt. He walked on tiptoe to the door, and gave a gentle tap. Two or three minutes passing without any reply, he gave another tap rather louder, and then another rather louder than that.

At length the sound of feet was audible upon the stairs, and then the light of a candle shone through the keyhole of the door. There was a good deal of unchaining and unbolting, and the door was slowly opened.

Now the door opened outwards: and as the door opened wider and wider, Mr. Pickwick receded behind it, more and more. What was his astonishment when he just peeped out by way of caution, to see that the per-

son who had opened it was — not Job Trotter, but a servant-girl with a candle in her hand! Mr. Pickwick drew in his head again, with the swiftness displayed by that admirable melodramatic performer, Punch, when he lies in wait for the flat-headed comedian with the tin box of music.

“It must have been the cat, Sarah,” said the girl, addressing herself to some one in the house. “Puss, puss, puss — tit, tit, tit.”

But no animal being decoyed by these blandishments, the girl slowly closed the door, and re-fastened it; leaving Mr. Pickwick drawn up straight against the wall.

“This is very curious,” thought Mr. Pickwick. “They are sitting up beyond their usual hour, I suppose. Extremely unfortunate, that they should have chosen this night, of all others, for such a purpose — exceedingly.” And with these thoughts, Mr. Pickwick cautiously retired to the angle of the wall in which he had been before ensconced; waiting until such time as he might deem it safe to repeat the signal.

He had not been here five minutes, when a vivid flash of lightning was followed by a loud peal of thunder that crashed and rolled away in the distance with terrific noise — then came another flash of lightning, brighter than the other, and a second peal of thunder louder than the first; and then down came the rain, with a force and fury that swept everything before it.

Mr. Pickwick was perfectly aware that a tree is a very dangerous neighbor in a thunder-storm. He had a tree on his right, a tree on his left, a third before him, and a fourth behind. If he remained where he was, he might fall the victim of an accident; if he showed himself in the centre of the garden, he might be consigned to a

constable ; — once or twice he tried to scale the wall, but having no other legs this time, than those with which Nature had furnished him, the only effect of his struggles was to inflict a variety of very unpleasant gratings on his knees and shins, and to throw him into a state of the most profuse perspiration.

“ What a dreadful situation ! ” said Mr. Pickwick, pausing to wipe his brow after this exercise. He looked up at the house — all was dark. They must be gone to bed now. He would try the signal again.

He walked on tiptoe across the moist gravel, and tapped at the door. He held his breath, and listened at the keyhole. No reply : very odd. Another knock. He listened again. There was a low whispering inside, and then a voice cried —

“ Who’s there ? ”

“ That’s not Job,” thought Mr. Pickwick, hastily drawing himself straight up against the wall again. “ It’s a woman.”

He had scarcely had time to form this conclusion, when a window above stairs was thrown up, and three or four female voices repeated the query — “ Who’s there ? ”

Mr. Pickwick dared not move hand or foot. It was clear that the whole establishment was roused. He made up his mind to remain where he was, until the alarm had subsided : and then by a supernatural effort to get over the wall, or perish in the attempt.

Like all Mr. Pickwick’s determinations, this was the best that could be made under the circumstances ; but, unfortunately, it was founded upon the assumption that they would not venture to open the door again. What was his discomfiture, when he heard the chain and bolts withdrawn, and saw the door slowly opening, wider and

wider! He retreated into the corner, step by step; but do what he would, the interposition of his own person prevented its being opened to its utmost width.

“Who’s there?” screamed a numerous chorus of treble voices from the staircase inside, consisting of the spinster lady of the establishment, three teachers, five female servants, and thirty boarders, all half-dressed, and in a forest of curl-papers.

Of course Mr. Pickwick didn’t say who *was* there: and then the burden of the chorus changed into — “Lor’! I am so frightened.”

“Cook,” said the lady abbess, who took care to be on the top stair, the very last of the group — “Cook, why don’t you go a little way into the garden?”

“Please, ma’am, I don’t like,” responded the cook.

“Lor’, what a stupid thing that cook is!” said the thirty boarders.

“Cook,” said the lady abbess, with great dignity; “don’t answer me, if you please. I insist upon your looking into the garden immediately.”

Here the cook began to cry, and the housemaid said it was “a shame!” for which partisanship she received a month’s warning on the spot.

“Do you hear, cook?” said the lady abbess, stamping her foot, impatiently.

“Don’t you hear your missis, cook?” said the three teachers.

“What an impudent thing that cook is!” said the thirty boarders.

The unfortunate cook, thus strongly urged, advanced a step or two, and holding her candle just where it prevented her from seeing anything at all, declared there was nothing there, and it must have been the wind. The

door was just going to be closed in consequence, when an inquisitive boarder, who had been peeping between the hinges, set up a fearful screaming, which called back the cook and the housemaid, and all the more adventurous, in no time.

“What is the matter with Miss Smithers?” said the lady abess, as the aforesaid Miss Smithers proceeded to go into hysterics of four young lady power.

“Lor’, Miss Smithers dear,” said the other nine-and-twenty boarders.

“Oh, the man — the man — behind the door!” screamed Miss Smithers.

The lady abess no sooner heard this appalling cry, than she retreated to her own bedroom, double-locked the door, and fainted away comfortably. The boarders, and the teachers, and the servants, fell back upon the stairs, and upon each other; and never was such a screaming, and fainting, and struggling beheld. In the midst of the tumult, Mr. Pickwick emerged from his concealment, and presented himself amongst them.

“Ladies — dear ladies,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Oh, he says we’re dear,” cried the oldest and ugliest teacher. “Oh, the wretch!”

“Ladies,” roared Mr. Pickwick, rendered desperate by the danger of his situation. “Hear me. I am no robber. I want the lady of the house.”

“Oh, what a ferocious monster!” screamed another teacher. “He wants Miss Tomkins.”

Here there was a general scream.

“Ring the alarm bell, somebody!” cried a dozen voices.

“Don’t — don’t,” shouted Mr. Pickwick. “Look at me. Do I look like a robber! My dear ladies — you



may bind me hand and leg, or lock me up in a closet, if you like. Only hear what I have got to say — only hear me.”

“How did you come in our garden?” faltered the housemaid.

“Call the lady of the house, and I’ll tell her everything — everything:” said Mr. Pickwick, exerting his lungs to the utmost pitch. “Call her — only be quiet, and call her, and you shall hear everything.”

It might have been Mr. Pickwick’s appearance, or it might have been his manner, or it might have been the temptation — so irresistible to a female mind — of hearing something at present enveloped in mystery, that reduced the more reasonable portion of the establishment (some four individuals) to a state of comparative quiet. By them it was proposed, as a test of Mr. Pickwick’s sincerity, that he should immediately submit to personal restraint; and that gentleman having consented to hold a conference with Miss Tomkins, from the interior of a closet in which the day-boarders hung their bonnets and sandwich-bags, he at once stepped into it, of his own accord, and was securely locked in. This revived the others; and Miss Tomkins having been brought-to, and brought down, the conference began.

“What did you do in my garden, Man?” said Miss Tomkins, in a faint voice.

“I came to warn you, that one of your young ladies was going to elope to-night,” replied Mr. Pickwick, from the interior of the closet.

“Elope!” exclaimed Miss Tomkins, the three teachers, the thirty boarders, and the five servants. “Who with?”

“Your friend, Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall.”

“*My* friend! I don’t know any such person.”

“Well; Mr. Jingle, then.”

“I never heard the name in my life.”

“Then, I have been deceived, and deluded,” said Mr. Pickwick. “I have been the victim of a conspiracy — a foul and base conspiracy. Send to the Angel, my dear ma’am, if you don’t believe me. Send to the Angel for Mr. Pickwick’s man-servant, I implore you, ma’am.”

“He must be respectable — he keeps a man-servant,” said Miss Tomkins to the writing and ciphering governess.

“It’s my opinion, Miss Tomkins,” said the writing and ciphering governess, “that his man-servant keeps him. I think he’s a madman, Miss Tomkins, and the other’s his keeper.”

“I think you are very right, Miss Gwynn,” responded Miss Tomkins. “Let two of the servants repair to the Angel, and let the others remain here, to protect us.”

So two of the servants were despatched to the Angel in search of Mr. Samuel Weller: and the remaining three stopped behind to protect Miss Tomkins, and the three teachers, and the thirty boarders. And Mr. Pickwick sat down in the closet, beneath a grove of sandwich bags, and awaited the return of the messengers, with all the philosophy and fortitude he could summon to his aid.

An hour and a half elapsed before they came back, and when they did come, Mr. Pickwick recognized, in addition to the voice of Mr. Samuel Weller, two other voices, the tones of which struck familiarly on his ear; but

whose they were, he could not for the life of him call to mind.

A very brief conversation ensued. The door was unlocked. Mr. Pickwick stepped out of the closet, and found himself in the presence of the whole establishment of Westgate House, Mr. Samuel Weller, and — old Wardle, and his destined son-in-law, Mr. Trundle!

“My dear friend,” said Mr. Pickwick, running forward and grasping Wardle’s hand, “my dear friend, pray, for Heaven’s sake, explain to this lady the unfortunate and dreadful situation in which I am placed. You must have heard it from my servant; say, at all events, my dear fellow, that I am neither a robber nor a madman.”

“I have said so, my dear friend. I have said so already,” replied Mr. Wardle, shaking the right hand of his friend, while Mr. Trundle shook the left.

“And whoever says, or has said, he is,” interposed Mr. Weller, stepping forward, “says that which is not the truth, but so far from it, on the contrary, quite the reverse. And if there’s any number o’ men on these here premises as has said so, I shall be wery happy to give ’em all a wery convincing proof o’ their being mistaken, in this here wery room, if these wery respectable ladies’ll have the goodness to retire and order ’em up, one at a time.” Having delivered this defiance with great volubility, Mr. Weller struck his open palm emphatically with his clenched fist, and winked pleasantly on Miss Tomkins: the intensity of whose horror at his supposing it within the bounds of possibility that there could be any men on the premises of Westgate House Establishment for Young Ladies, it is impossible to describe.

Mr. Pickwick's explanation having been already partially made, was soon concluded. But neither in the course of his walk home with his friends, nor afterwards when seated before a blazing fire at the supper he so much needed, could a single observation be drawn from him. He seemed bewildered and amazed. Once, and only once, he turned round to Mr. Wardle, and said,

“How did you come here?”

“Trundle and I came down here, for some good shooting on the first,” replied Wardle. “We arrived to-night, and were astonished to hear from your servant that you were here too. But I am glad you are,” said the old fellow, slapping him on the back. “I am glad you are. We shall have a jovial party on the first, and we'll give Winkle another chance — eh, old boy?”

Mr. Pickwick made no reply; he did not even ask after his friends at Dingley Dell, and shortly afterwards retired for the night, desiring Sam to fetch his candle when he rung.

The bell did ring in due course, and Mr. Weller presented himself.

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking out from under the bedclothes.

“Sir,” said Mr. Weller.

Mr. Pickwick paused, and Mr. Weller snuffed the candle.

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick again, as if with a desperate effort.

“Sir,” said Mr. Weller, once more.

“Where is that Trotter?”

“Job, sir?”

“Yes.”

“Gone, sir.”

“With his master, I suppose?”

“Friend or master, or whatever he is, he’s gone with him,” replied Mr. Weller. “There’s a pair on ’em, sir.”

“Jingle suspected my design, and set that fellow on you, with this story, I suppose?” said Mr. Pickwick, half choking.

“Just that, sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“It was all false, of course?”

“All, sir,” replied Mr. Weller. “Reg’lar do, sir; artful dodge.”

“I don’t think he’ll escape us quite so easily the next time, Sam?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“I don’t think he will, sir.”

“Whenever I meet that Jingle again, wherever it is,” said Mr. Pickwick, raising himself in bed, and indenting his pillow with a tremendous blow, “I’ll inflict personal chastisement on him, in addition to the exposure he so richly merits. I will, or my name is not Pickwick.”

“And whenever I catches hold o’ that there melancholly chap with the black hair,” said Sam, “if I don’t bring some real water into his eyes, for once in a way, my name a’n’t Weller. Good-night, sir!”

## CHAPTER XVII.

SHOWING THAT AN ATTACK OF RHEUMATISM, IN SOME CASES, ACTS AS A QUICKENER TO INVENTIVE GENIUS.

THE constitution of Mr. Pickwick, though able to sustain a very considerable amount of exertion and fatigue, was not proof against such a combination of attacks as he had undergone on the memorable night, recorded in the last chapter. The process of being washed in the night air, and rough-dried in a closet, is as dangerous as it is peculiar. Mr. Pickwick was laid up with an attack of rheumatism.

But although the bodily powers of the great man were thus impaired, his mental energies retained their pristine vigor. His spirits were elastic; his good humor was restored. Even the vexation consequent upon his recent adventure had vanished from his mind; and he could join in the hearty laughter which any allusion to it excited in Mr. Wardle, without anger and without embarrassment. Nay, more. During the two days Mr. Pickwick was confined to his bed, Sam was his constant attendant. On the first, he endeavored to amuse his master by anecdote and conversation; on the second Mr. Pickwick demanded his writing-desk, and pen and ink, and was deeply engaged during the whole day. On the third, being able

to sit up in his bed-chamber, he despatched his valet with a message to Mr. Wardle and Mr. Trundle, intimating that if they would take their wine there, that evening, they would greatly oblige him. The invitation was most willingly accepted; and when they were seated over their wine, Mr. Pickwick, with sundry blushes, produced the following little tale, as having been "edited" by himself, during his recent indisposition, from his notes of Mr. Weller's unsophisticated recital.

#### "THE PARISH CLERK.

##### A TALE OF TRUE LOVE.

"ONCE upon a time in a very small country town, at a considerable distance from London, there lived a little man named Nathaniel Pipkin, who was the parish clerk of the little town, and lived in a little house in the little high street, within ten minutes' walk of the little church; and who was to be found every day from nine till four teaching a little learning to the little boys. Nathaniel Pipkin was a harmless, inoffensive good-natured being, with a turned-up nose, and rather turned-in legs: a cast in his eye, and a halt in his gait; and he divided his time between the church and his school, verily believing that there existed not, on the face of the earth, so clever a man as the curate, so imposing an apartment as the vestry-room, or so well-ordered a seminary as his own. Once, and only once, in his life, Nathaniel Pipkin had seen a bishop—a real bishop, with his arms in lawn sleeves, and his head in a wig. He had seen him walk,

and heard him talk, at a confirmation, on which momentous occasion Nathaniel Pipkin was so overcome with reverence and awe, when the aforesaid bishop laid his hand on his head, that he fainted right clean away, and was borne out of church in the arms of the beadle.

“This was a great event, a tremendous era, in Nathaniel Pipkin’s life, and it was the only one that had ever occurred to ruffle the smooth current of his quiet existence, when happening one fine afternoon, in a fit of mental abstraction, to raise his eyes from the slate on which he was devising some tremendous problem in compound addition for an offending urchin to solve, they suddenly rested on the blooming countenance of Maria Lobbs, the only daughter of old Lobbs, the great saddler over the way. Now, the eyes of Mr. Pipkin had rested on the pretty face of Maria Lobbs many a time and oft before, at church and elsewhere: but the eyes of Maria Lobbs had never looked so bright, the cheeks of Maria Lobbs had never looked so ruddy, as upon this particular occasion. No wonder then, that Nathaniel Pipkin was unable to take his eyes from the countenance of Miss Lobbs; no wonder that Miss Lobbs, finding herself stared at by a young man, withdrew her head from the window out of which she had been peeping, and shut the case-ment and pulled down the blind; no wonder that Nathaniel Pipkin, immediately thereafter, fell upon the young urchin who had previously offended, and cuffed and knocked him about to his heart’s content. All this was very natural, and there’s nothing at all to wonder at about it.

“It *is* matter of wonder, though, that any one of Mr. Nathaniel Pipkin’s retiring disposition, nervous temperament, and most particularly diminutive income, should



from this day forth, have dared to aspire to the hand and heart of the only daughter of the fiery old Lobbs — of old Lobbs the great saddler, who could have bought up the whole village at one stroke of his pen, and never felt the outlay — old Lobbs, who was well known to have heaps of money invested in the bank at the nearest market town — old Lobbs, who was reported to have countless and inexhaustible treasures hoarded up in the little iron safe with the big key-hole, over the chimney-piece in the back parlor — old Lobbs, who, it was well known, on festive occasions garnished his board with a real silver tea-pot, cream-ewer, and sugar-basin, which he was wont, in the pride of his heart, to boast should be his daughter's property when she found a man to her mind. I repeat it, to be matter of profound astonishment and intense wonder, that Nathaniel Pipkin should have had the temerity to cast his eyes in this direction. But love is blind: and Nathaniel had a cast in his eye: and perhaps these two circumstances, taken together, prevented his seeing the matter in its proper light.

“Now, if old Lobbs had entertained the most remote or distant idea of the state of the affections of Nathaniel Pipkin, he would just have razed the school-room to the ground, or exterminated its master from the surface of the earth, or committed some other outrage and atrocity of an equally ferocious and violent description; for he was a terrible old fellow, was Lobbs, when his pride was injured, or his blood was up. Swear! Such trains of oaths would come rolling and pealing over the way, sometimes, when he was denouncing the idleness of the bony apprentice with the thin legs, that Nathaniel Pipkin would shake in his shoes with horror, and the hair of the pupils' heads would stand on end with fright.

“ Well! Day after day, when school was over, and the pupils gone, did Nathaniel Pipkin sit himself down at the front window, and while he feigned to be reading a book, throw sidelong glances over the way in search of the bright eyes of Maria Lobbs; and he hadn't sat there many days, before the bright eyes appeared at an upper window, apparently deeply engaged in reading too. This was delightful, and gladdening to the heart of Nathaniel Pipkin. It was something to sit there for hours together, and look upon that pretty face when the eyes were cast down; but when Maria Lobbs began to raise her eyes from her book, and dart their rays in the direction of Nathaniel Pipkin, his delight and admiration were perfectly boundless. At last, one day when he knew old Lobbs was out, Nathaniel Pipkin had the temerity to kiss his hand to Maria Lobbs; and Maria Lobbs, instead of shutting the window, and pulling down the blind, kissed *hers* to him, and smiled. Upon which Nathaniel Pipkin determined, that, come what might, he would develop the state of his feelings without further delay.

“ A prettier foot, a gayer heart, a more dimpled face, or a smarter form, never bounded so lightly over the earth they graced, as did those of Maria Lobbs, the old saddler's daughter. There was a roguish twinkle in her sparkling eyes, that would have made its way to far less susceptible bosoms than that of Nathaniel Pipkin; and there was such a joyous sound in her merry laugh, that the sternest misanthrope must have smiled to hear it. Even old Lobbs himself, in the very height of his ferocity, couldn't resist the coaxing of his pretty daughter; and when she, and her cousin Kate — an arch, impudent-looking, bewitching little person — made a dead set upon

the old man together, as, to say the truth, they very often did, he could have refused them nothing, even had they asked for a portion of the countless and inexhaustible treasures, which were hidden from the light, in the iron safe.

“Nathaniel Pipkin’s heart beat high within him, when he saw this enticing little couple some hundred yards before him, one summer’s evening, in the very field in which he had many a time strolled about till night-time, and pondered on the beauty of Maria Lobbs. But though he had often thought then, how briskly he would walk up to Maria Lobbs and tell her of his passion if he could only meet her, he felt, now that she was unexpectedly before him, all the blood in his body mounting to his face, manifestly to the great detriment of his legs, which, deprived of their usual portion, trembled beneath him. When they stopped to gather a hedge-flower, or listen to a bird, Nathaniel Pipkin stopped too, and pretended to be absorbed in meditation, as indeed he really was; for he was thinking what on earth he should ever do, when they turned back, as they inevitably must in time, and meet him face to face. But though he was afraid to make up to them, he couldn’t bear to lose sight of them; so when they walked faster he walked faster, when they lingered he lingered, and when they stopped he stopped; and so they might have gone on, until the darkness prevented them, if Kate had not looked slyly back, and encouragingly beckoned Nathaniel to advance. There was something in Kate’s manner that was not to be resisted, and so Nathaniel Pipkin complied with the invitation; and after a great deal of blushing on his part, and immoderate laughter on that of the wicked little cousin, Nathaniel Pipkin went down on his knees

on the dewy grass, and declared his resolution to remain there forever, unless he were permitted to rise the accepted lover of Maria Lobbs. Upon this, the merry laughter of Maria Lobbs rang through the calm evening air — without seeming to disturb it, though; it had such a pleasant sound — and the wicked little cousin laughed more immoderately than before, and Nathaniel Pipkin blushed deeper than ever. At length, Maria Lobbs being more strenuously urged by the love-worn little man, turned away her head, and whispered her cousin to say, or at all events Kate *did* say, that she felt much honored by Mr. Pipkin's addresses; that her hand and heart were at her father's disposal; but that nobody could be insensible to Mr. Pipkin's merits. As all this was said with much gravity, and as Nathaniel Pipkin walked home with Maria Lobbs, and struggled for a kiss at parting, he went to bed a happy man, and dreamed all night long of softening old Lobbs, opening the strong box, and marrying Maria.

“The next day, Nathaniel Pipkin saw old Lobbs go out upon his old gray pony, and after a great many signs at the window from the wicked little cousin, the object and meaning of which he could by no means understand, the bony apprentice with the thin legs came over to say that his master wasn't coming home all night, and that the ladies expected Mr. Pipkin to tea, at six o'clock precisely. How the lessons were got through that day, neither Nathaniel Pipkin nor his pupils knew any more than you do; but they were got through somehow, and, after the boys had gone, Nathaniel Pipkin took till full six o'clock to dress himself to his satisfaction. Not that it took long to select the garments he should wear, inasmuch as he had no choice about the matter; but the putting of

them on to the best advantage, and the touching of them up previously, was a task of no inconsiderable difficulty or importance.

“ There was a very snug little party, consisting of Maria Lobbs and her cousin Kate, and three or four romping, good-humored, rosy-cheeked girls. Nathaniel Pipkin had ocular demonstration of the fact, that the rumors of old Lobbs’s treasures were not exaggerated. There were the real solid silver tea-pot, cream-ewer, and sugar-basin, on the table, and real silver spoons to stir the tea with, and real china cups to drink it out of, and plates of the same, to hold the cakes and toast in. The only eyesore in the whole place, was another cousin of Maria Lobbs’s, and a brother of Kate, whom Maria Lobbs called ‘ Henry,’ and who seemed to keep Maria Lobbs all to himself, up in one corner of the table. It’s a delightful thing to see affection in families, but it may be carried rather too far, and Nathaniel Pipkin could not help thinking that Maria Lobbs must be very particularly fond of her relations, if she paid as much attention to all of them as to this individual cousin. After tea, too, when the wicked little cousin proposed a game at blind man’s buff, it somehow or other happened that Nathaniel Pipkin was nearly always blind, and whenever he laid his hand upon the male cousin, he was sure to find that Maria Lobbs was not far off. And though the wicked little cousin and the other girls pinched him, and pulled his hair, and pushed chairs in his way, and all sorts of things, Maria Lobbs never seemed to come near him at all : and once — once — Nathaniel Pipkin could have sworn he heard the sound of a kiss, followed by a faint remonstrance from Maria Lobbs, and a half-suppressed laugh from her female friends. All this was odd — very odd — and there is

no saying what Nathaniel Pipkin might or might not have done, in consequence, if his thoughts had not been suddenly directed into a new channel.

“The circumstance which directed his thoughts into a new channel was a loud knocking at the street-door, and the person who made this loud knocking at the street-door, was no other than old Lobbs himself, who had unexpectedly returned, and was hammering away, like a coffin-maker : for he wanted his supper. The alarming intelligence was no sooner communicated by the bony apprentice with the thin legs, than the girls tripped up stairs to Maria Lobbs’s bedroom, and the male cousin and Nathaniel Pipkin were thrust into a couple of closets in the sitting-room, for want of any better places of concealment ; and when Maria Lobbs and the wicked little cousin had stowed them away, and put the room to rights, they opened the street-door to old Lobbs, who had never left off knocking since he first began.

“Now it did unfortunately happen that old Lobbs being very hungry was monstrous cross. Nathaniel Pipkin could hear him growling away like an old mastiff with a sore throat ; and whenever the unfortunate apprentice with the thin legs came into the room, so surely did old Lobbs commence swearing at him in a most Saracenic and ferocious manner, though apparently with no other end or object than that of easing his bosom by the discharge of a few superfluous oaths. At length some supper, which had been warming up, was placed on the table, and then old Lobbs fell to, in regular style ; and having made clear work of it in no time, kissed his daughter, and demanded his pipe.

“Nature had placed Nathaniel Pipkin’s knees in very close juxtaposition, but when he heard old Lobbs demand

his pipe, they knocked together, as if they were going to reduce each other to powder ; for, depending from a couple of hooks, in the very closet in which he stood, was a large brown-stemmed silver-bowled pipe, which pipe he himself had seen in the mouth of old Lobbs, regularly every afternoon and evening, for the last five years. The two girls went down-stairs for the pipe, and up-stairs for the pipe, and everywhere but where they knew the pipe was, and old Lobbs stormed away meanwhile, in the most wonderful manner. At last he thought of the closet, and walked up to it. It was of no use a little man like Nathaniel Pipkin pulling the door inwards, when a great strong fellow like old Lobbs was pulling it outwards. Old Lobbs gave it one tug, and open it flew, disclosing Nathaniel Pipkin standing bolt upright inside, and shaking with apprehension from head to foot. Bless us ! what an appalling look old Lobbs gave him, as he dragged him out by the collar, and held him at arm's length.

“ ‘Why, what the devil do you want here ?’ said old Lobbs, in a fearful voice.

“ Nathaniel Pipkin could make no reply, so old Lobbs shook him backwards and forwards, for two or three minutes, by way of arranging his ideas for him.

“ ‘What do you want here ?’ roared Lobbs ; ‘I suppose *you* have come after my daughter, now ?’

“ Old Lobbs merely said this as a sneer : for he did not believe that mortal presumption could have carried Nathaniel Pipkin so far. What was his indignation, when that poor man replied —

“ ‘Yes, I did, Mr. Lobbs — I did come after your daughter. I love her, Mr. Lobbs.’

“ ‘Why, you snivelling, wry-faced, puny villain,’ gasped old Lobbs, paralyzed by the atrocious confession ; ‘what

do you mean by that? Say this to my face! Damme, I'll throttle you.'

"It is by no means improbable that old Lobbs would have carried this threat into execution, in the excess of his rage, if his arm had not been stayed by a very unexpected apparition, to wit, the male cousin, who, stepping out of his closet, and walking up to old Lobbs, said —

"I cannot allow this harmless person, sir, who has been asked here, in some girlish frolic, to take upon himself, in a very noble manner, the fault (if fault it is) which I am guilty of, and am ready to avow. *I* love your daughter, sir; and *I* came here for the purpose of meeting her.'

"Old Lobbs opened his eyes very wide at this, but not wider than Nathaniel Pipkin.

"'You did?' said Lobbs: at last finding breath to speak.

"'I did.'

"'And I forbade you this house, long ago.'

"'You did, or I should not have been here, clandestinely, to-night.'

"I am sorry to record it of old Lobbs, but I think he would have struck the cousin, if his pretty daughter, with her bright eyes swimming in tears, had not clung to his arm.

"'Don't stop him, Maria,' said the young man: 'if he has the will to strike me, let him. I would not hurt a hair of his gray head for the riches of the world.'

"The old man cast down his eyes at this reproof, and they met those of his daughter. I have hinted once or twice before, that they were very bright eyes, and, though they were tearful now, their influence was by no means lessened. Old Lobbs turned his head away, as if to avoid



being persuaded by them, when, as fortune would have it, he encountered the face of the wicked little cousin, who, half afraid for her brother, and half laughing at Nathaniel Pipkin, presented as bewitching an expression of countenance, with a touch of slyness in it too, as any man, old or young, need look upon. She drew her arm coaxingly through the old man's, and whispered something in his ear; and do what he would, old Lobbs couldn't help breaking out into a smile, while a tear stole down his cheek, at the same time.

“Five minutes after this, the girls were brought down from the bedroom with a great deal of giggling and modesty; and while the young people were making themselves perfectly happy, old Lobbs got down the pipe, and smoked it; and it was a remarkable circumstance about that particular pipe of tobacco, that it was the most soothing and delightful one he ever smoked.

“Nathaniel Pipkin thought it best to keep his own counsel, and by so doing gradually rose into high favor with old Lobbs, who taught him to smoke in time; and they used to sit out in the garden on the fine evenings, for many years afterwards, smoking and drinking in great state. He soon recovered from the effects of his attachment, for we find his name in the parish register, as a witness to the marriage of Maria Lobbs to her cousin; and it also appears, by reference to other documents, that on the night of the wedding, he was incarcerated in the village cage, for having, in a state of extreme intoxication, committed sundry excesses in the streets, in all of which he was aided and abetted by the bony apprentice with the thin legs.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

BRIEFLY ILLUSTRATIVE OF TWO POINTS ; — FIRST, THE POWER OF HYSTERICIS, AND, SECONDLY, THE FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

FOR two days after the breakfast at Mrs. Hunter's, the Pickwickians remained at Eatanswill, anxiously awaiting the arrival of some intelligence from their revered leader. Mr. Tupman and Mr. Snodgrass were once again left to their own means of amusement; for Mr. Winkle, in compliance with a most pressing invitation, continued to reside at Mr. Pott's house, and to devote his time to the companionship of his amiable lady. Nor was the occasional society of Mr. Pott himself wanting to complete their felicity. Deeply immersed in the intensity of his speculations for the public weal, and the destruction of the Independent, it was not the habit of that great man to descend from his mental pinnacle to the humble level of ordinary minds. On this occasion, however, and as if expressly in compliment to any follower of Mr. Pickwick's, he unbent, relaxed, stepped down from his pedestal, and walked upon the ground: benignly adapting his remarks to the comprehension of the herd, and seeming in outward form, if not in spirit, to be one of them.

Such having been the demeanor of this celebrated

public character towards Mr. Winkle, it will be readily imagined that considerable surprise was depicted on the countenance of the latter gentleman, when, as he was sitting alone in the breakfast-room, the door was hastily thrown open, and as hastily closed, on the entrance of Mr. Pott, who, stalking majestically towards him, and thrusting aside his proffered hand, ground his teeth, as if to put a sharper edge on what he was about to utter, and exclaimed, in a saw-like voice, —

“Serpent!”

“Sir!” exclaimed Mr. Winkle, starting from his chair.

“Serpent, sir!” repeated Mr. Pott, raising his voice, and then suddenly depressing it; “I said, Serpent, sir — make the most of it.”

When you have parted with a man, at two o’clock in the morning, on terms of the utmost good-fellowship, and he meets you again, at half-past nine, and greets you as a serpent, it is not unreasonable to conclude that something of an unpleasant nature has occurred meanwhile. So Mr. Winkle thought. He returned Mr. Pott’s gaze of stone, and, in compliance with that gentleman’s request, proceeded to make the most he could of the “serpent.” The most, however, was nothing at all; so, after a profound silence of some minutes’ duration, he said, —

“Serpent, sir! Serpent, Mr. Pott! What can you mean, sir? — this is pleasantry.”

“Pleasantry, sir!” exclaimed Pott, with a motion of the hand, indicative of a strong desire to hurl the Britannia metal teapot at the head of his visitor. “Pleasantry, sir! — but no, I will be calm; I will be calm, sir:” in proof of his calmness, Mr. Pott flung himself into a chair, and foamed at the mouth.

“My dear sir,” interposed Mr. Winkle.

“*Dear sir!*” replied Pott. “How dare you address me as dear sir, sir? How dare you look me in the face and do it, sir?”

“Well, sir, if you come to that,” responded Mr. Winkle, “how dare you look *me* in the face, and call me a serpent, sir?”

“Because you are one,” replied Mr. Pott.

“Prove it, sir,” said Mr. Winkle, warmly. “Prove it.”

A malignant scowl passed over the profound face of the editor, as he drew from his pocket the Independent of that morning; and laying his finger on a particular paragraph, threw the journal across the table to Mr. Winkle.

That gentleman took it up, and read as follows:—

“Our obscure and filthy contemporary, in some disgusting observations on the recent election for this borough, has presumed to violate the hallowed sanctity of private life, and to refer, in a manner not to be misunderstood, to the personal affairs of our late candidate—aye, and, notwithstanding his base defeat, we will add, our future member, Mr. Fizkin. What does our dastardly contemporary mean? What would the ruffian say, if we, setting at nought, like him, the decencies of social intercourse, were to raise the curtain which happily conceals HIS private life from general ridicule, not to say from general execration? What, if we were even to point out, and comment on, facts and circumstances, which are publicly notorious, and beheld by every one but our mole-eyed contemporary—what if we were to print the following effusion, which we received while we were writing the commencement of

this article, from a talented fellow-townsmen and correspondent!

“‘LINES TO A BRASS POT.

“‘ Oh Pott! if you'd known  
 How false she'd have grown,  
 When you heard the marriage bells tinkle;  
 You'd have done then, I vow,  
 What you cannot help now,  
 And handed her over to W \* \* \* \* \*

“What,” said Mr. Pott, solemnly: “what rhymes to ‘tinkle,’ villain?”

“What rhymes to tinkle?” said Mrs. Pott, whose entrance at the moment forestalled the reply. “What rhymes to tinkle? Why, Winkle, I should conceive.” Saying this, Mrs. Pott smiled sweetly on the disturbed Pickwickian, and extended her hand towards him. The agitated young man would have accepted it, in his confusion, had not Pott indignantly interposed.

“Back, ma'am — back!” said the editor. “Take his hand before my very face!”

“Mr. P!” said his astonished lady.

“Wretched woman, look here,” exclaimed the husband. “Look here, ma'am — ‘Lines to a Brass Pot.’ ‘Brass pot’; — that's me, ma'am. ‘False *she'd* have grown’; — that's you, ma'am — you.” With this ebullition of rage, which was not unaccompanied with something like a tremble, at the expression of his wife's face, Mr. Pott dashed the current number of the Eatanswill Independent at her feet.

“Upon my word, sir,” said the astonished Mrs. Pott, stooping to pick up the paper. “Upon my word, sir!”

Mr. Pott winced beneath the contemptuous gaze of his wife. He had made a desperate struggle to screw up his courage, but it was fast coming unscrewed again.

There appears nothing very tremendous in this little sentence, "Upon my word, sir," when it comes to be read; but the tone of voice in which it was delivered, and the look that accompanied it, both seeming to bear reference to some revenge to be thereafter visited upon the head of Pott, produced their full effect upon him. The most unskilful observer could have detected in his troubled countenance a readiness to resign his Wellington boots to any efficient substitute who would have consented to stand in them at that moment.

Mrs. Pott read the paragraph, uttered a loud shriek, and threw herself at full length on the hearth-rug, screaming, and tapping it with the heels of her shoes, in a manner which could leave no doubt of the propriety of her feelings on the occasion.

"My dear," said the terrified Pott, — "I didn't say I believed it; — I ——" but the unfortunate man's voice was drowned in the screaming of his partner.

"Mrs. Pott, let me entreat you, my dear ma'am, to compose yourself," said Mr. Winkle; but the shrieks and tappings were louder and more frequent than ever.

"My dear," said Mr. Pott, "I am very sorry. If you won't consider your own health, consider me, my dear. We shall have a crowd round the house." But the more strenuously Mr. Pott entreated, the more vehemently the screams poured forth.

Very fortunately, however, attached to Mrs. Pott's person was a body-guard of one, a young lady whose ostensible employment was to preside over her toilet, but who rendered herself useful in a variety of ways, and in

none more so than in the particular department of constantly aiding and abetting her mistress in every wish and inclination opposed to the desires of the unhappy Pott. The screams reached this young lady's ears in due course, and brought her into the room with a speed which threatened to derange materially the very exquisite arrangement of her cap and ringlets.

"Oh, my dear, dear mistress!" exclaimed the body-guard, kneeling frantically by the side of the prostrate Mrs. Pott. "Oh, my dear mistress, what is the matter?"

"Your master — your brutal master," murmured the patient.

Pott was evidently giving way.

"It's a shame," said the body-guard, reproachfully. "I know he'll be the death on you, ma'am. Poor dear thing!"

He gave way more. The opposite party followed up the attack.

"Oh don't leave me — don't leave me, Goodwin," murmured Mrs. Pott, clutching at the wrists of the said Goodwin with an hysteric jerk. "You're the only person that's kind to me, Goodwin."

At this affecting appeal, Goodwin got up a little domestic tragedy of her own, and shed tears copiously.

"Never, ma'am — never," said Goodwin. "Oh, sir, you should be careful — you should indeed; you don't know what harm you may do missis; you'll be sorry for it one day, I know — I've always said so."

The unlucky Pott looked timidly on, but said nothing

"Goodwin," said Mrs. Pott, in a soft voice.

"Ma'am," said Goodwin.

"If you only knew how I have loved that man"——

“ Don't distress yourself by recollecting it, ma'am,” said the body-guard.

Pott looked very frightened. It was time to finish him.

“ And now,” sobbed Mrs. Pott — “ now, after all, to be treated in this way ; to be reproached and insulted in the presence of a third party, and that party almost a stranger. But I will not submit to it ! Goodwin,” continued Mrs. Pott, raising herself in the arms of her attendant, “ my brother, the Lieutenant, shall interfere. I'll be separated, Goodwin.”

“ It would certainly serve him right, ma'am,” said Goodwin.

Whatever thoughts the threat of a separation might have awakened in Mr. Pott's mind, he forebore to give utterance to them, and contented himself by saying, with great humility, —

“ My dear, will you hear me ? ”

A fresh train of sobs was the only reply, as Mrs. Pott grew more hysterical, requested to be informed why she was ever born, and required sundry other pieces of information of a similar description.

“ My dear,” remonstrated Mr. Pott, “ do not give way to these sensitive feelings. I never believed that the paragraph had any foundation, my dear — impossible. I was only angry, my dear — I may say outrageous — with the Independent people for daring to insert it ; that's all : ” Mr. Pott cast an imploring look at the innocent cause of the mischief, as if to entreat him to say nothing about the serpent.

“ And what steps, sir, do you mean to take to obtain redress ? ” inquired Mr. Winkle, gaining courage as he saw Pott losing it.



“Oh, Goodwin,” observed Mrs. Pott, “does he mean to horsewhip the editor of the Independent — does he, Goodwin?”

“Hush, hush, ma’am; pray keep yourself quiet,” replied the body-guard. “I dare say he will, if you wish it, ma’am.”

“Certainly,” said Pott, as his wife evinced decided symptoms of going off again. “Of course I shall.”

“When, Goodwin — when?” said Mrs. Pott, still undecided about the going off.

“Immediately, of course,” said Mr. Pott; “before the day is out.”

“Oh, Goodwin,” resumed Mrs. Pott, “it’s the only way of meeting the slander, and setting me right with the world.”

“Certainly, ma’am,” replied Goodwin. “No man as is a man, ma’am, could refuse to do it.”

So, as the hysterics were still hovering about, Mr. Pott said once more, that he would do it; but Mrs. Pott was so overcome at the bare idea of having ever been suspected, that she was half-a-dozen times on the very verge of a relapse, and most unquestionably would have gone off, had it not been for the indefatigable efforts of the assiduous Goodwin, and repeated entreaties for pardon from the conquered Pott; and finally, when that unhappy individual had been frightened and snubbed down to his proper level, Mrs. Pott recovered, and they went to breakfast.

“You will not allow this base newspaper slander to shorten your stay here, Mr. Winkle?” said Mrs. Pott, smiling through the traces of her tears.

“I hope not,” said Mr. Pott, actuated, as he spoke,

by a wish that his visitor would choke himself with the morsel of dry toast which he was raising to his lips at the moment : and so terminate his stay effectually.

“ I hope not.”

“ You are very good,” said Mr. Winkle ; “ but a letter has been received from Mr. Pickwick — so I learn by a note from Mr. Tupman, which was brought up to my bedroom door, this morning — in which he requests us to join him at Bury to-day ; and we are to leave by the coach at noon.”

“ But you will come back ? ” said Mrs. Pott.

“ Oh, certainly,” replied Mr. Winkle.

“ You are quite sure ? ” said Mrs. Pott, stealing a tender look at her visitor.

“ Quite,” responded Mr. Winkle,

The breakfast passed off in silence, for each member of the party was brooding over his, or her, own personal grievances. Mrs. Pott was regretting the loss of a beau ; Mr. Pott his rash pledge to horsewhip the Independent ; Mr. Winkle his having innocently placed himself in so awkward a situation. Noon approached, and after many adieux and promises to return, he tore himself away.

“ If he ever comes back, I’ll poison him,” thought Mr. Pott, as he turned into the little back office where he prepared his thunderbolts.

“ If I ever do come back, and mix myself up with these people again,” thought Mr. Winkle, as he wended his way to the Peacock, “ I shall deserve to be horsewhipped myself — that’s all.”

His friends were ready, the coach was nearly so, and in half-an-hour they were proceeding on their journey,

along the road over which Mr. Pickwick and Sam had so recently travelled, and of which, as we have already said something, we do not feel called upon to extract Mr. Snodgrass's poetical and beautiful description.

Mr. Weller was standing at the door of the Angel, ready to receive them, and by that gentleman they were ushered to the apartment of Mr. Pickwick, where, to the no small surprise of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass, and the no small embarrassment of Mr. Tupman, they found old Wardle and Trundle.

"How are you?" said the old man, grasping Mr. Tupman's hand. "Don't hang back, or look sentimental about it; it can't be helped, old fellow. For her sake, I wish you'd had her; for your own, I'm very glad you have not. A young fellow like you, will do better one of these days — eh?" With this consolation, Wardle slapped Mr. Tupman on the back, and laughed heartily.

"Well, and how are you, my fine fellows?" said the old gentleman, shaking hands with Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass at the same time. "I have just been telling Pickwick that we must have you all down at Christmas. We're going to have a wedding — a real wedding this time."

"A wedding!" exclaimed Mr. Snodgrass, turning very pale.

"Yes, a wedding. But don't be frightened," said the good-humored old man; "it's only Trundle there, and Bella."

"Oh, is that all?" said Mr. Snodgrass, relieved from a painful doubt which had fallen heavily on his breast. "Give you joy, sir. How is Joe?"

“Oh, he; — very well,” replied the old gentleman. “Sleepy as ever.”

“And your mother, and the clergyman, and all of ’em?”

“Quite well.”

“Where,” said Mr. Tupman, with an effort — “where is — *she*, sir?” and he turned away his head, and covered his eyes with his hand.

“*She!*” said the old gentleman, with a knowing shake of the head. “Do you mean my single relative — eh?”

Mr. Tupman, by a nod, intimated that his question applied to the disappointed Rachael.

“Oh, she’s gone away,” said the old gentleman. “She’s living at a relation’s, far enough off. She couldn’t bear to see the girls, so I let her go. But come! Here’s the dinner. You must be hungry after your ride. I am, without any ride at all; so let us fall to.”

Ample justice was done to the meal; and when they were seated round the table, after it had been disposed of, Mr. Pickwick, to the intense horror and indignation of his followers, related the adventure he had undergone, and the success which had attended the base artifices of the diabolical Jingle.

“And the attack of rheumatism which I caught in that garden,” said Mr. Pickwick, in conclusion, “renders me lame at this moment.”

“I, too, have had something of an adventure,” said Mr. Winkle, with a smile; and at the request of Mr. Pickwick, he detailed the malicious libel of the Eatan-swill Independent, and the consequent excitement of their friend, the editor.

Mr. Pickwick’s brow darkened during the recital. His friends observed it, and, when Mr. Winkle had

concluded, maintained a profound silence. Mr. Pickwick struck the table emphatically with his clenched fist, and spoke as follows:—

“Is it not a wonderful circumstance,” said Mr. Pickwick, “that we seem destined to enter no man’s house, without involving him in some degree of trouble? Does it not, I ask, bespeak the indiscretion, or, worse than that, the blackness of heart — that I should say so! — of my followers, that beneath whatever roof they locate, they disturb the peace of mind and happiness of some confiding female? Is it not, I say” —

Mr. Pickwick would in all probability have gone on for some time, had not the entrance of Sam, with a letter, caused him to break off in his eloquent discourse. He passed his handkerchief across his forehead, took off his spectacles, wiped them, and put them on again; and his voice had recovered its wonted softness of tone, when he said, —

“What have you there, Sam?”

“Called at the Post-office just now, and found this here letter, as has laid there for two days,” replied Mr. Weller. “It’s sealed with a vafer, and directed in round hand.”

“I don’t know this hand,” said Mr. Pickwick, opening the letter. “Mercy on us! what’s this? It must be a jest; it — it — can’t be true.”

“What’s the matter?” was the general inquiry.

“Nobody dead, is there?” said Wardle, alarmed at the horror in Mr. Pickwick’s countenance.

Mr. Pickwick made no reply, but, pushing the letter across the table, and desiring Mr. Tupman to read it aloud, fell back in his chair with a look of vacant astonishment quite alarming to behold.

Mr. Tupman, with a trembling voice, read the letter, of which the following is a copy : —

*Freeman's Court, Cornhill,  
August 28th, 1830.*

*Bardell against Pickwick.*

*Sir,*

*Having been instructed by Mrs. Martha Bardell, to commence an action against you, for a breach of promise of marriage, for which the plaintiff lays her damages at fifteen hundred pounds, we beg to inform you that a writ has been issued against you in this suit, in the Court of Common Pleas; and request to know, by return of post, the name of your attorney in London, who will accept service thereof.*

*We are, Sir,*

*Your obedient servants,*

*Dodson and Fogg.*

*Mr. Samuel Pickwick.*

There was something so impressive in the mute astonishment with which each man regarded his neighbor, and every man regarded Mr. Pickwick, that all seemed afraid to speak. The silence was at length broken by Mr. Tupman.

“Dodson and Fogg,” he repeated mechanically.

“Bardell and Pickwick,” said Mr. Snodgrass, musing.

“Peace of mind and happiness of confiding females,” murmured Mr. Winkle with an air of abstraction.

“It’s a conspiracy,” said Mr. Pickwick, at length recovering the power of speech; “a base conspiracy between these two grasping attorneys, Dodson and Fogg Mrs. Bardell would never do it; — she hasn’t the heart

to do it; — she hasn't the case to do it. Ridiculous — ridiculous."

"Of her heart," said Wardle, with a smile, "you should certainly be the best judge. I don't wish to discourage you, but I should certainly say that, of her case Dodson and Fogg are far better judges than any of us can be."

"It's a vile attempt to extort money," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I hope it is," said Wardle, with a short dry cough.

"Who ever heard me address her in any way but that in which a lodger would address his landlady?" continued Mr. Pickwick, with great vehemence. "Who ever saw me with her? Not even my friends here"——

"Except on one occasion," said Mr. Tupman.

Mr. Pickwick changed color.

"Ah," said Wardle. "Well, that's important. There was nothing suspicious then, I suppose?"

Mr. Tupman glanced timidly at his leader. "Why," he said, "there was nothing suspicious; but — I don't know how it happened, mind — she certainly was reclining in his arms."

"Gracious powers!" ejaculated Mr. Pickwick, as the recollection of the scene in question struck forcibly upon him; "what a dreadful instance of the force of circumstances! So she was — so she was."

"And our friend was soothing her anguish," said Mr. Winkle, rather maliciously.

"So I was," said Mr. Pickwick. "I won't deny it. So I was."

"Hallo!" said Wardle; "for a case in which there's nothing suspicious, this looks rather queer — eh, Pick-

wick? Ah, sly dog — sly dog!” and he laughed till the glasses on the sideboard rang again.

“What a dreadful conjunction of appearances!” exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, resting his chin upon his hands. “Winkle — Tupman — I beg your pardon for the observations I made just now. We are all the victims of circumstances, and I the greatest.” With this apology, Mr. Pickwick buried his head in his hands, and ruminated; while Wardle measured out a regular circle of nods and winks, addressed to the other members of the company.

“I’ll have it explained, though,” said Mr. Pickwick, raising his head, and hammering the table. “I’ll see this Dodson and Fogg! I’ll go to London to-morrow.”

“Not to-morrow,” said Wardle; “you’re too lame.”

“Well then, next day.”

“Next day is the first of September, and you’re pledged to ride out with us as far as Sir Geoffrey Manning’s grounds, at all events, and to meet us at lunch, if you don’t take the field.”

“Well then, the day after,” said Mr. Pickwick; “Thursday. — Sam!”

“Sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“Take two places outside to London, on Thursday morning, for yourself and me.”

“Wery well, sir.”

Mr. Weller left the room, and departed slowly on his errand, with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes fixed on the ground.

“Rum feller, the hemperor,” said Mr. Weller, as he walked slowly up the street. “Think o’ his making up to that ’ere Mrs. Bardell — vith a little boy, too! Al-



ways the vay vith these here old 'uns hows'ever, as is such steady goers to look at. I didn't think he'd ha' done it, though—I didn't think he'd ha' done it!" And moralizing in this strain, Mr. Samuel Weller bent his steps towards the booking-office.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## A PLEASANT DAY, WITH AN UNPLEASANT TERMINATION.

THE birds, who, happily for their own peace of mind, and personal comfort, were in blissful ignorance of the preparations which had been making to astonish them, on the first of September, hailed it no doubt, as one of the pleasantest mornings they had seen that season. Many a young partridge who strutted complacently among the stubble, with all the finicking coxcomby of youth, and many an older one who watched his levity out of his little round eye, with the contemptuous air of a bird of wisdom and experience, alike unconscious of their approaching doom, basked in the fresh morning air with lively and blithesome feelings, and a few hours afterwards were laid low upon the earth. But we grow affecting: let us proceed.

In plain commonplace matter-of-fact, then, it was a fine morning — so fine that you would scarcely have believed that the few months of an English summer had yet flown by. Hedges, fields, and trees, hill and moorland, presented to the eye their ever-varying shades of deep rich green; scarce a leaf had fallen, scarce a sprinkle of yellow mingled with the hues of summer, warned you that autumn had begun. The sky was cloudless; the sun shone out bright and warm; the songs of

birds, and hum of myriads of summer insects, filled the air; and the cottage gardens, crowded with flowers of every rich and beautiful tint, sparkled, in the heavy dew, like beds of glittering jewels. Everything bore the stamp of summer, and none of its beautiful colors had yet faded from the dye?

Such was the morning, when an open carriage, in which were three Pickwickians, (Mr. Snodgrass having preferred to remain at home,) Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Trundle, with Sam Weller on the box beside the driver, pulled up by a gate at the road-side, before which stood a tall, raw-boned game-keeper, and a half-booted, leather-legged boy: each bearing a bag of capacious dimensions, and accompanied by a brace of pointers.

“I say,” whispered Mr. Winkle to Wardle, as the man let down the steps, “they don’t suppose we’re going to kill game enough to fill those bags, do they?”

“Fill them!” exclaimed old Wardle. “Bless you, yes! You shall fill one, and I the other; and when we’ve done with them, the pockets of our shooting-jackets will hold as much more.”

Mr. Winkle dismounted without saying anything in reply to this observation; but he thought within himself, that if the party remained in the open air, until he had filled one of the bags, they stood a considerable chance of catching colds in their heads.

“Hi, Juno, lass — hi, old girl; down, Daph, down,” said Wardle, caressing the dogs. “Sir Geoffrey still in Scotland, of course, Martin?”

The tall game-keeper replied in the affirmative, and looked with some surprise from Mr. Winkle, who was holding his gun, as if he wished his coat-pocket to save him the trouble of pulling the trigger, to Mr. Tupman,

who was holding his, as if he were afraid of it — as there is no earthly reason to doubt he really was.

“My friends are not much in the way of this sort of thing yet, Martin,” said Wardle, noticing the look. “Live and learn, you know. They’ll be good shots one of these days. I beg my friend Winkle’s pardon, though; he has had some practice.”

Mr. Winkle smiled feebly over his blue neckerchief in acknowledgment of the compliment, and got himself so mysteriously entangled with his gun, in his modest confusion, that if the piece had been loaded, he must inevitably have shot himself dead upon the spot.

“You mustn’t handle your piece in that ’ere way, when you come to have the charge in it, sir,” said the tall gamekeeper gruffly, “or I’m damned if you won’t make cold meat of some on us.”

Mr. Winkle, thus admonished, abruptly altered its position, and in so doing, contrived to bring the barrel into pretty smart contact with Mr. Weller’s head.

“Hallo!” said Sam, picking up his hat, which had been knocked off, and rubbing his temple. “Hallo, sir! if you comes it this vay, you’ll fill one o’ them bags, and something to spare, at one fire.”

Here the leather-leggined boy laughed very heartily, and then tried to look as if it was somebody else, whereat Mr. Winkle frowned majestically.

“Where did you tell the boy to meet us with the snack, Martin?” inquired Wardle.

“Side of One-tree Hill, at twelve o’clock, sir.”

“That’s not Sir Geoffrey’s land, is it?”

“No, sir; but it’s close by it. It’s Captain Boldwig’s land; but there’ll be nobody to interrupt us, and there’s a fine bit of turf there.”

“Very well,” said old Wardle. “Now the sooner we’re off the better. Will you join us at twelve, then, Pickwick?”

Mr. Pickwick was particularly desirous to view the sport, the more especially as he was rather anxious in respect of Mr. Winkle’s life and limbs. On so inviting a morning, too, it was very tantalizing to turn back, and leave his friends to enjoy themselves. It was, therefore, with a very rueful air that he replied, —

“Why, I suppose I must.”

“A’n’t the gentleman a shot, sir?” inquired the long game-keeper.

“No,” replied Wardle; “and he’s lame besides.”

“I should very much like to go,” said Mr. Pickwick, “very much.”

There was a short pause of commiseration.

“There’s a barrow t’other side the hedge,” said the boy. “If the gentleman’s servant would wheel along the paths, he could keep nigh us, and we could lift it over the stiles and that.”

“The wery thing,” said Mr. Weller, who was a party interested, inasmuch as he ardently longed to see the sport. “The wery thing. Well said, Smallcheck; I’ll have it out, in a minute.”

But here a difficulty arose. The long game-keeper resolutely protested against the introduction into a shooting party, of a gentleman in a barrow, as a gross violation of all established rules and precedents.

It was a great objection, but not an insurmountable one. The game-keeper having been coaxed and feed, and having, moreover, eased his mind by “punching” the head of the inventive youth who had first suggested the use of the machine, Mr. Pickwick was placed in it, and

off the party set; Wardle and the long game-keeper leading the way, and Mr. Pickwick in the barrow, propelled by Sam, bringing up the rear.

“Stop, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, when they had got half across the first field.

“What’s the matter now?” said Wardle.

“I won’t suffer this barrow to be moved another step,” said Mr. Pickwick, resolutely, “unless Winkle carries that gun of his, in a different manner.”

“How *am* I to carry it?” said the wretched Winkle.

“Carry it with the muzzle to the ground,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“It’s so unsportsman-like,” reasoned Winkle.

“I don’t care whether it’s unsportsman-like or not,” replied Mr. Pickwick; “I am not going to be shot in a wheelbarrow, for the sake of appearances, to please anybody.”

“I know the gentleman’ll put that ’ere charge into somebody afore he’s done,” growled the long man.

“Well, well — I don’t mind,” said poor Mr. Winkle, turning his gunstock uppermost; — “there.”

“Anythin’ for a quiet life,” said Mr. Weller; and on they went again.

“Stop!” said Mr. Pickwick, after they had gone a few yards farther.

“What now?” said Wardle.

“That gun of Tupman’s is not safe: I know it isn’t,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Eh? What! not safe?” said Mr. Tupman, in a tone of great alarm.

“Not as you are carrying it,” said Mr. Pickwick. “I am very sorry to make any further objection, but I cannot consent to go on, unless you carry it, as Winkle does his.”

"I think you had better, sir," said the long game-keeper, "or you're quite as likely to lodge the charge in yourself as in anything else."

Mr. Tupman, with the most obliging haste, placed his piece in the position required, and the party moved on again; the two amateurs marching with reversed arms, like a couple of privates at a royal funeral.

The dogs suddenly came to a dead stop, and the party advancing stealthily a single pace, stopped too.

"What's the matter with the dogs' legs?" whispered Mr. Winkle. "How queer they're standing."

"Hush, can't you?" replied Wardle, softly. "Don't you see, they're making a point?"

"Making a point!" said Mr. Winkle, staring about him, as if he expected to discover some particular beauty in the landscape, which the sagacious animals were calling special attention to. "Making a point! What are they pointing at?"

"Keep your eyes open," said Wardle, not heeding the question in the excitement of the moment. "Now then."

There was a sharp whirring noise, that made Mr. Winkle start back as if he had been shot himself. Bang, bang, went a couple of guns; — the smoke swept quickly away over the field, and curled into the air.

"Where are they?" said Mr. Winkle, in a state of the highest excitement, turning round and round in all directions. "Where are they? Tell me when to fire. Where are they — where are they?"

"Where are they?" said Wardle, taking up a brace of birds which the dogs had deposited at his feet. "Where are they! Why, here they are."

"No, no; I mean the others," said the bewildered Winkle.

"Far enough off, by this time," replied Wardle, coolly reloading his gun.

"We shall very likely be up with another covey in five minutes," said the long game-keeper. "If the gentleman begins to fire now, perhaps he'll just get the shot out of the barrel by the time they rise."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Weller.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, compassionating his follower's confusion and embarrassment.

"Sir."

"Don't laugh."

"Certainly not, sir." So, by way of indemnification, Mr. Weller contorted his features from behind the wheelbarrow, for the exclusive amusement of the boy with the leggings, who thereupon burst into a boisterous laugh, and was summarily cuffed by the long game-keeper, who wanted a pretext for turning round, to hide his own merriment.

"Bravo, old fellow!" said Wardle to Mr. Tupman; "you fired that time, at all events."

"Oh yes," replied Mr. Tupman; with conscious pride. "I let it off."

"Well done. You'll hit something next time, if you look sharp. Very easy, a'n't it?"

"Yes, it's very easy," said Mr. Tupman. "How it hurts one's shoulder, though. It nearly knocked me backwards. I had no idea these small fire-arms kicked so."

"Ah," said the old gentleman, smiling; "you'll get used to it in time. Now then — all ready — all right with the barrow there?"

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Come along then."



"Hold hard, sir," said Sam, raising the barrow.

"Ay, ay," replied Mr. Pickwick; and on they went, as briskly as need be.

"Keep that barrow back now," cried Wardle, when it had been hoisted over a stile into another field, and Mr. Pickwick had been deposited in it once more.

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller, pausing.

"Now Winkle," said the old gentleman, "follow me softly, and don't be too late this time."

"Never fear," said Mr. Winkle. "Are they pointing?"

"No, no; not now. Quietly now, quietly." On they crept, and very quietly they would have advanced, if Mr. Winkle, in the performance of some very intricate evolutions with his gun, had not accidentally fired, at the most critical moment, over the boy's head, exactly in the very spot where the tall man's brain would have been, had he been there instead.

"Why, what on earth did you do that for?" said old Wardle, as the birds flew unharmed away.

"I never saw such a gun in my life," replied poor Winkle, looking at the lock, as if that would do any good. "It goes off, of its own accord. It *will* do it."

"Will do it!" echoed Wardle, with something of irritation in his manner. "I wish it would kill something of its own accord."

"It'll do that afore long, sir," observed the tall man, in a low, prophetic voice.

"What do you mean by that observation, sir?" inquired Mr. Winkle, angrily.

"Never mind, sir, never mind," replied the long game-keeper; "I've no family myself, sir; and this here boy's mother will get something handsome from Sir Geoffrey, if he's killed on his land. Load again, sir, load again."

“Take away his gun,” cried Mr. Pickwick from the barrow, horror-stricken at the long man’s dark insinuations. “Take away his gun, do you hear, somebody?”

Nobody, however, volunteered to obey the command; and Mr. Winkle, after darting a rebellious glance at Mr. Pickwick, reloaded his gun, and proceeded onwards with the rest.

We are bound, on the authority of Mr. Pickwick, to state, that Mr. Tupman’s mode of proceeding evinced far more of prudence and deliberation, than that adopted by Mr. Winkle. Still, this by no means detracts from the great authority of the latter gentleman, on all matters connected with the field; because, as Mr. Pickwick beautifully observes it has somehow or other happened, from time immemorial, that many of the best and ablest philosophers, who have been perfect lights of science in matters of theory, have been wholly unable to reduce them to practice.

Mr. Tupman’s process, like many of our most sublime discoveries, was extremely simple. With the quickness and penetration of a man of genius, he had at once observed that the two great points to be attained were — first, to discharge his piece without injury to himself, and, secondly, to do so, without danger to the by-standers; — obviously, the best thing to do, after surmounting the difficulty of firing at all, was to shut his eyes firmly, and fire into the air.

On one occasion, after performing this feat, Mr. Tupman, on opening his eyes, beheld a plump partridge in the very act of falling wounded to the ground. He was on the point of congratulating Mr. Wardle on his invariable success, when that gentleman advanced towards him, and grasped him warmly by the hand.

“Tupman,” said the old gentleman, “you singled out that particular bird?”

“No,” said Mr. Tupman — “no.”

“You did,” said Wardle. “I saw you do it — I observed you pick him out — I noticed you, as you raised your piece to take aim; and I will say this, that the best shot in existence could not have done it more beautifully. You are an older hand at this, than I thought you, Tupman; you have been out before.”

It was in vain for Mr. Tupman to protest, with a smile of self-denial, that he never had. The very smile was taken as evidence to the contrary; and from that time forth, his reputation was established. It is not the only reputation that has been acquired as easily, nor are such fortunate circumstances confined to partridge-shooting.

Meanwhile, Mr. Winklé flashed, and blazed, and smoked away, without producing any material results worthy of being noted down; sometimes expending his charge in mid-air, and at others sending it skimming along so near the surface of the ground, as to place the lives of the two dogs on a rather uncertain and precarious tenure. As a display of fancy shooting, it was extremely varied and curious; as an exhibition of firing with any precise object, it was, upon the whole, perhaps a failure. It is an established axiom, that “every bullet has its billet.” If it apply in an equal degree to shot, those of Mr. Winklé were unfortunate foundlings, deprived of their natural rights, cast loose upon the world, and billeted nowhere.

“Well,” said Wardle, walking up to the side of the barrow, and wiping the streams of perspiration from his jolly red face; “smoking day, isn’t it?”

“It is indeed,” replied Mr. Pickwick. “The sun is

tremendously hot, even to me. I don't know how you must feel it."

"Why," said the old gentleman, "pretty hot. It's past twelve, though. You see that green hill there?"

"Certainly."

"That's the place where we are to lunch; and, by Jove, there's the boy with the basket, punctual as clock-work!"

"So he is," said Mr. Pickwick, brightening up. "Good boy, that. I'll give him a shilling, presently. Now, then, Sam, wheel away."

"Hold on, sir," said Mr. Weller, invigorated with the prospects of refreshments. "Out of the way, young leathers. If you walley my precious life don't upset me, as the gen'l'man said to the driver, when they was a-carryin' him to Tyburn." And quickening his pace to a sharp run, Mr. Weller wheeled his master nimbly to the green hill, shot him dexterously out by the very side of the basket, and proceeded to unpack it with the utmost dispatch.

"Weal pie," said Mr. Weller, soliloquizing, as he arranged the eatables on the grass. "Wery good thing is a weal pie, when you know the lady as made it, and is quite sure it a'n't kittens; and arter all though, where's the odds, when they're so like weal that the wery piemen themselves don't know the difference?"

"Don't they, Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Not they, sir," replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat. "I lodged in the same house with a pieman once, sir, and a wery nice man he was — reg'lar clever chap, too — make pies out o' anything, he could. 'What a number o' cats you keep, Mr. Brooks,' says I, when I'd got intimate with him. 'Ah,' says he, 'I do — a good

many,' says he. 'You must be wery fond o' cats,' says I.

Other people is,' says he, a-winkin' at me; 'they a'n't in season till the winter though,' says he. 'Not in season!' says I. 'No,' says he, 'fruits is in, cats is out.' 'Why, what do you mean?' says I. 'Mean?' says he. 'That I'll never be a party to the combination o' the butchers, to keep up the prices o' meat,' says he. 'Mr. Weller,' says he, a-squeezing my hand wery hard, and vispering in my ear — 'don't mention this here ag'in — but it's the seasonin' as does it. They're all made o' them noble animals,' says he, a-pointin' to a wery nice little tabby kitten, 'and I seasons 'em for beef-steak, weal, or kidney, 'cordin' to the demand. And more than that,' says he, 'I can make a weal a beef-steak, or a beef-steak a kidney, or any one on 'em a mutton, at a minute's notice, just as the market changes, and appetites wary!'"

"He must have been a very ingenious young man, that, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, with a slight shudder.

"Just was, sir," replied Mr. Weller, continuing his occupation of emptying the basket, "and the pies was beautiful. Tongue; well that's a wery good thing when it a'n't a woman's. Bread — knuckle o' ham, reg'lar picter — cold beef in slices, wery good. What's in them stone jars, young touch-and-go?"

"Beer in this one," replied the boy, taking from his shoulder a couple of large stone bottles, fastened together by a leathern strap — "cold punch in t'other."

"And a wery good notion of a lunch it is, take it altogether," said Mr. Weller, surveying his arrangement of the repast with great satisfaction. "Now, gen'l'men, 'fall on,' as the English said to the French when they fixed bagginets."

It needed no second invitation to induce the party to

yield full justice to the meal; and as little pressing did it require, to induce Mr. Weller, the long game-keeper, and the two boys, to station themselves on the grass at a little distance, and do good execution upon a decent proportion of the viands. An old oak-tree afforded a pleasant shelter to the group, and a rich prospect of arable and meadow land, intersected with luxuriant hedges, and richly ornamented with wood, lay spread out below them.

“This is delightful — thoroughly delightful!” said Mr. Pickwick, the skin of whose expressive countenance, was rapidly peeling off, with exposure to the sun.

“So it is: so it is, old fellow,” replied Wardle. “Come; a glass of punch.”

“With great pleasure,” said Mr. Pickwick; and the satisfaction of his countenance after drinking it, bore testimony to the sincerity of the reply.

“Good,” said Mr. Pickwick, smacking his lips. “Very good. I’ll take another. Cool; very cool. Come, gentlemen,” continued Mr. Pickwick, still retaining his hold upon the jar, “a toast. Our friends at Dingley Dell.”

The toast was drunk with loud acclamations.

“I’ll tell you what I shall do, to get up my shooting again,” said Mr. Winkle, who was eating bread and ham with a pocket-knife. “I’ll put a stuffed partridge on the top of a post, and practise at it, beginning at a short distance, and lengthening it by degrees. I understand it’s capital practice.”

“I know a gen’l man, sir,” said Mr. Weller, “as did that, and begun at two yards; but he never tried it on ag’in; for he blowed the bird right clean away at the first fire, and nobody ever seed a feather on him arter wards.”

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“Have the goodness to reserve your anecdotes, till they are called for.”

“Cert’nly, sir.”

Here Mr. Weller winked the eye which was not concealed by the beer-can he was raising to his lips, with such exquisiteness, that the two boys went into spontaneous convulsions, and even the long man condescended to smile.

“Well, that certainly is most capital cold punch,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking earnestly at the stone bottle; “and the day is extremely warm, and — Tupman, my dear friend, a glass of punch?”

“With the greatest delight,” replied Mr. Tupman; and having drank that glass, Mr. Pickwick took another, just to see whether there was any orange peel in the punch, because orange peel always disagreed with him; and finding that there was not, Mr. Pickwick took another glass to the health of their absent friend, and then felt himself imperatively called upon to propose another in honor of the punch-compounder, unknown.

This constant succession of glasses, produced considerable effect upon Mr. Pickwick; his countenance beamed with the most sunny smiles, laughter played around his lips, and good-humored merriment twinkled in his eye. Yielding by degrees to the influence of the exciting liquid, rendered more so by the heat, Mr. Pickwick expressed a strong desire to recollect a song which he had heard in his infancy, and the attempt proving abortive, sought to stimulate his memory with more glasses of punch, which appeared to have quite a contrary effect; for, from forgetting the words of the song, he began to forget how to articulate any words at all; and finally,

after rising to his legs to address the company in an eloquent speech, he fell into the barrow, and fast asleep, simultaneously.

The basket having been repacked, and it being found perfectly impossible to awaken Mr. Pickwick from his torpor, some discussion took place whether it would be better for Mr. Weller to wheel his master back again, or to leave him where he was, until they should all be ready to return. The latter course was at length decided on; and as their further expedition was not to exceed an hour's duration, and as Mr. Weller begged very hard to be one of the party, it was determined to leave Mr. Pickwick asleep in the barrow, and to call for him on their return. So away they went, leaving Mr. Pickwick snoring most comfortably in the shade.

That Mr. Pickwick would have continued to snore in the shade until his friends came back, or, in default thereof, until the shades of evening had fallen on the landscape, there appears no reasonable cause to doubt; always supposing that he had been suffered to remain there, in peace. But he was *not* suffered to remain there in peace. And this is what prevented him.

Captain Boldwig was a little fierce man in a stiff black neckerchief and blue surtout, who, when he did condescend to walk about his property, did it in company with a thick rattan stick, with a brass ferrule, and a gardener and sub-gardener with meek faces, to whom (the gardeners, not the stick) Captain Boldwig gave his orders with all due grandeur and ferocity: for Captain Boldwig's wife's sister had married a Marquis, and the Captain's house was a villa, and his land "grounds," and it was all very high, and mighty, and great.

Mr. Pickwick had not been asleep half an hour, when



little Captain Boldwig, followed by the two gardeners, came striding along as fast as his size and importance would let him; and when he came near the oak-tree, Captain Boldwig paused, and drew a long breath, and looked at the prospect, as if he thought the prospect ought to be highly gratified at having him to take notice of it; and then he struck the ground emphatically with his stick, and summoned the head-gardener.

“Hunt,” said Captain Boldwig.

“Yes, sir,” said the gardener.

“Roll this place to-morrow morning — do you hear, Hunt?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And take care that you keep me this place in good order — do you hear, Hunt?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And remind me to have a board done about trespassers, and spring-guns, and all that sort of thing, to keep the common people out. Do you hear, Hunt; do you hear?”

“I’ll not forget it, sir.”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said the other man, advancing, with his hand to his hat.

“Well, Wilkins, what’s the matter with *you*?” said Captain Boldwig.

“I beg your pardon, sir — but I think there have been trespassers here to-day.”

“Ha!” said the Captain, scowling around him.

“Yes, sir — they have been dining here, I think, sir.”

“Why, confound their audacity, so they have,” said Captain Boldwig, as the crumbs and fragments that were strewn upon the grass met his eye. “They have actually been devouring their food here. I wish I had the

vagabonds here!" said the Captain, clenching the thick stick.

"I wish I had the vagabonds here," said the Captain wrathfully.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Wilkins, "but" —

"But what? Eh?" roared the Captain; and following the timid glance of Wilkins, his eyes encountered the wheelbarrow and Mr. Pickwick.

"Who are you, you rascal?" said the Captain, administering several pokes to Mr. Pickwick's body with the thick stick. "What's your name?"

"Cold punch," murmured Mr. Pickwick, as he sunk to sleep again.

"What?" demanded Captain Boldwig.

No reply.

"What did he say his name was?" asked the Captain.

"Punch, I think, sir," replied Wilkins.

"That's his impudence — that's his confounded impudence," said Captain Boldwig. "He's only feigning to be asleep now," said the Captain, in a high passion. "He's drunk; he's a drunken plebeian. Wheel him away, Wilkins, wheel him away directly."

"Where shall I wheel him to, sir?" inquired Wilkins, with great timidity.

"Wheel him to the Devil," replied Captain Boldwig.

"Very well, sir," said Wilkins.

"Stay," said the Captain.

Wilkins stopped accordingly.

"Wheel him," said the Captain, "wheel him to the pound; and let us see whether he calls himself Punch, when he comes to himself. He shall not bully me — he shall not bully me. Wheel him away."

Away Mr. Pickwick was wheeled in compliance with this imperious mandate ; and the great Captain Boldwig, swelling with indignation, proceeded on his walk.

Inexpressible was the astonishment of the little party when they returned, to find that Mr. Pickwick had disappeared, and taken the wheelbarrow with him. It was the most mysterious and unaccountable thing that was ever heard of. For a lame man to have got upon his legs without any previous notice, and walked off, would have been most extraordinary ; but when it came to his wheeling a heavy barrow before him, by way of amusement, it grew positively miraculous. They searched every nook and corner round, together and separately : they shouted, whistled, laughed, called — and all with the same result. Mr. Pickwick was not to be found. After some hours of fruitless search, they arrived at the unwelcome conclusion, that they must go home without him.

Meanwhile Mr. Pickwick had been wheeled to the Pound, and safely deposited therein, fast asleep in the wheelbarrow, to the immeasurable delight and satisfaction, not only of all the boys in the village, but three fourths of the whole population, who had gathered round, in expectation of his waking. If their most intense gratification had been excited by seeing him wheeled in, how many hundred-fold was their joy increased when, after a few indistinct cries of “ Sam ! ” he sat up in the barrow and gazed with indescribable astonishment on the faces before him.

A general shout was of course the signal of his having woke up ; and his involuntary inquiry of “ What’s the matter ? ” occasioned another, louder than the first, if possible.

“Here’s a game!” roared the populace.

“Where am I?” exclaimed Mr. Pickwick.

“In the Pound,” replied the mob.

“How came I here? What was I doing? Where was I brought from?”

“Boldwig — Captain Boldwig!” was the only reply.

“Let me out,” cried Mr. Pickwick. “Where’s my servant? Where are my friends?”

“You a’n’t got no friends. Hurrah!” Then there came a turnip, then a potato, and then an egg: with a few other little tokens of the playful disposition of the many-headed.

How long this scene might have lasted, or how much Mr. Pickwick might have suffered, no one can tell, had not a carriage which was driving swiftly by, suddenly pulled up, from whence there descended old Wardle and Sam Weller, the former of whom, in far less time than it takes to write it, if not to read it, had made his way to Mr. Pickwick’s side, and placed him in the vehicle, just as the latter had concluded the third and last round of a single combat with the town-beadle.

“Run to the Justice’s!” cried a dozen voices.

“Ah, run away,” said Mr. Weller, jumping up on the box. “Give my compliments — Mr. Veller’s compliments — to the Justice, and tell him I’ve spiled his beadle, and that, if he’ll swear in a new ’un, I’ll come back again to-morrow and spile him. Drive on, old feller.”

“I’ll give directions for the commencement of an action for false imprisonment against this Captain Boldwig, directly I get to London,” said Mr. Pickwick, as soon as the carriage turned out of the town.

“We were trespassing, it seems,” said Wardle.

“I don’t care,” said Mr. Pickwick, “I’ll bring the action.”

“No, you won’t,” said Wardle.

“I will, by” — but as there was a humorous expression in Wardle’s face, Mr. Pickwick checked himself, and said — “Why not?”

“Because,” said old Wardle, half-bursting with laughter, “because they might turn round on some of us, and say we had taken too much cold punch.”

Do what he would, a smile would come into Mr. Pickwick’s face; the smile extended into a laugh; the laugh into a roar; and the roar became general. So, to keep up their good humor, they stopped at the first road-side tavern they came to, and ordered a glass of brandy and water all round, with a magnum of extra strength, for Mr. Samuel Weller.

## CHAPTER XX.

SHOWING HOW DODSON AND FOGG WERE MEN OF BUSINESS, AND THEIR CLERKS MEN OF PLEASURE; AND HOW AN AFFECTING INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE BETWEEN MR. WELLER AND HIS LONG-LOST PARENT; SHOWING ALSO WHAT CHOICE SPIRITS ASSEMBLED AT THE MAGPIE AND STUMP, AND WHAT A CAPITAL CHAPTER THE NEXT ONE WILL BE.

IN the ground-floor front of a dingy house, at the very farthest end of Freeman's Court, Cornhill, sat the four clerks of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg, two of his Majesty's Attorneys of the Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas at Westminster, and solicitors of the High Court of Chancery: the aforesaid clerks catching as favorable glimpses of Heaven's light and Heaven's sun, in the course of their daily labors, as a man might hope to do, were he placed at the bottom of a reasonably deep well; and without the opportunity of perceiving the stars in the day-time, which the latter secluded situation affords.

The clerks' office of Messrs. Dodson and Fogg was a dark, mouldy, earthy-smelling room, with a high wainscotted partition to screen the clerks from the vulgar gaze: a couple of old wooden chairs: a very loud-ticking clock: an almanac, an umbrella-stand, a row of

hat pegs, and a few shelves, on which were deposited several ticketed bundles of dirty papers, some old deal boxes with paper labels, and sundry decayed stone ink-bottles of various shapes and sizes. There was a glass door leading into the passage which formed the entrance to the court, and on the outer side of this glass door, Mr. Pickwick, closely followed by Sam Weller, presented himself on the Friday morning succeeding the occurrence, of which a faithful narration is given in the last chapter.

“Come in, can’t you!” cried a voice from behind the partition, in reply to Mr. Pickwick’s gentle tap at the door. And Mr. Pickwick and Sam entered accordingly.

“Mr. Dodson or Mr. Fogg at home, sir?” inquired Mr. Pickwick, gently advancing, hat in hand, towards the partition.

“Mr. Dodson a’n’t at home, and Mr. Fogg’s particularly engaged,” replied the voice; and at the same time the head to which the voice belonged, with a pen behind its ear, looked over the partition, and at Mr. Pickwick.

It was a ragged head, the sandy hair of which, scrupulously parted on one side, and flattened down with pomatum, was twisted into little semicircular tails round a flat face ornamented with a pair of small eyes, and garnished with a very dirty shirt collar, and a rusty black stock.

“Mr. Dodson a’n’t at home, and Mr. Fogg’s particularly engaged,” said the man to whom the head belonged.

“When will Mr. Dodson be back, sir?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“Can’t say.”

“Will it be long before Mr. Fogg is disengaged, sir?”

“Don’t know.”

Here the man proceeded to mend his pen with great deliberation, while another clerk, who was mixing a Seidlitz powder, under cover of the lid of his desk, laughed approvingly.

“I think I’ll wait,” said Mr. Pickwick. There was no reply; so Mr. Pickwick sat down unbidden, and listened to the loud ticking of the clock and the murmured conversation of the clerks.

“That was a game, wasn’t it?” said one of the gentlemen, in a brown coat and brass buttons, inky drabs, and bluchers, at the conclusion of some inaudible relation of his previous evening’s adventures.

“Devilish good — devilish good,” said the Seidlitz-powder man.

“Tom Cummins was in the chair,” said the man with the brown coat; “it was half-past four when I got to Somers Town, and then I was so uncommon lushy that I couldn’t find the place where the latch-key went in, and was obliged to knock up the old ’ooman. I say, I wonder what old Fogg ’ud say, if he knew it. I should get the sack, I s’pose — eh?”

At this humorous notion, all the clerks laughed in concert.

“There was such a game with Fogg here, this mornin’,” said the man in the brown coat, “while Jack was up-stairs sorting the papers, and you two were gone to the stamp-office. Fogg was down here, opening the letters, when that chap as we issued the writ against at Camberwell, you know, came in — what’s his name again?”



“Ramsey,” said the clerk who had spoken to Mr. Pickwick.

“Ah, Ramsey — a precious seedy-looking customer. ‘Well, sir,’ says old Fogg, looking at him very fierce — you know his way — ‘well, sir, have you come to settle?’ ‘Yes, I have, sir,’ said Ramsey, putting his hand in his pocket, and bringing out the money, ‘the debt’s two pound ten, and the costs three pound five, and here it is, sir;’ and he sighed like bricks, as he lugged out the money, done up in a bit of blotting-paper. Old Fogg looked first at the money, and then at him, and then he coughed in his rum way, so that I knew something was coming. ‘You don’t know there’s a declaration filed, which increases the costs materially, I suppose?’ said Fogg. ‘You don’t say that, sir,’ said Ramsey, starting back; ‘the time was only out, last night, sir.’ ‘I do say it, though,’ said Fogg, ‘my clerk’s just gone to file it. Hasn’t Mr. Jackson gone to file that declaration in Bullman and Ramsey, Mr. Wicks?’ Of course I said yes, and then Fogg coughed again, and looked at Ramsey. ‘My God!’ said Ramsey; ‘and here have I nearly driven myself mad, scraping this money together, and all to no purpose.’ ‘None at all,’ said Fogg, coolly; ‘so you had better go back and scrape some more together, and bring it here in time.’ ‘I can’t get it, by God,’ said Ramsey, striking the desk with his fist. ‘Don’t bully me, sir,’ said Fogg, getting into a passion on purpose. ‘I am not bullying you, sir,’ said Ramsey. ‘You are,’ said Fogg; ‘get out, sir; get out of this office, sir, and come back, sir, when you know how to behave yourself.’ Well, Ramsey tried to speak, but Fogg wouldn’t let him, so he put the money in his pocket, and sneaked out. The door was scarcely shut, when old Fogg turned

round to me, with a sweet smile on his face, and drew the declaration out of his coat pocket. 'Here, Wicks,' says Fogg, 'take a cab, and go down to the Temple as quick as you can, and file that. The costs are quite safe, for he's a steady man with a large family, at a salary of five-and-twenty shillings a week, and if he gives us a warrant of attorney, as he must in the end, I know his employers will see it paid; so we may as well get all we can out of him, Mr. Wicks; it's a Christian act to do it, Mr. Wicks, for with his large family and small income, he'll be all the better for a good lesson against getting into debt,—won't he, Mr. Wicks, won't he?'—and he smiled so good-naturedly as he went away, that it was delightful to see him. He is a capital man of business," said Wicks, in a tone of the deepest admiration, "capital, isn't he?"

The other three cordially subscribed to this opinion, and the anecdote afforded the most unlimited satisfaction.

"Nice men these here, sir," whispered Mr. Weller to his master; "very nice notion of fun they has, sir."

Mr. Pickwick nodded assent, and coughed to attract the attention of the young gentlemen behind the partition, who, having now relaxed their minds by a little conversation among themselves, condescended to take some notice of the stranger.

"I wonder whether Fogg's disengaged now?" said Jackson.

"I'll see," said Wicks, dismounting leisurely from his stool. "What name shall I tell Mr. Fogg?"

"Pickwick," replied the illustrious subject of these memoirs.

Mr. Jackson departed up-stairs on his errand, and immediately returned with a message that Mr. Fogg would

see Mr. Pickwick in five minutes ; and having delivered it, returned again to his desk.

“What did he say his name was?” whispered Wicks.

“Pickwick,” replied Jackson ; “it’s the defendant in Bardell and Pickwick.”

A sudden scraping of feet, mingled with the sound of suppressed laughter, was heard from behind the partition.

“They’re a twiggin’ of you, sir,” whispered Mr. Weller.

“Twigging of me, Sam!” replied Mr. Pickwick ; “what do you mean by twigging me?”

Mr. Weller replied by pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, and Mr. Pickwick, on looking up, became sensible of the pleasing fact, that all the four clerks, with countenances expressive of the utmost amusement, and with their heads thrust over the wooden screen, were minutely inspecting the figure and general appearance of the supposed trifler with female hearts, and disturber of female happiness. On his looking up, the row of heads suddenly disappeared, and the sound of pens travelling at a furious rate over paper, immediately succeeded.

A sudden ring at the bell which hung in the office, summoned Mr. Jackson to the apartment of Fogg, from whence he came back to say that he (Fogg) was ready to see Mr. Pickwick if he would step up-stairs.

Up-stairs Mr. Pickwick did step accordingly, leaving Sam Weller below. The room-door of the one-pair back, bore inscribed in legible characters the imposing words “Mr. Fogg;” and, having tapped thereat, and been desired to come in, Jackson ushered Mr. Pickwick into the presence.

“Is Mr. Dodson in?” inquired Mr. Fogg.

“Just come in, sir,” replied Jackson.

“Ask him to step here.”

“Yes, sir.” Exit Jackson.

“Take a seat, sir,” said Fogg; “there is the paper, sir; my partner will be here directly, and we can converse about this matter, sir.”

Mr. Pickwick took a seat and the paper, but instead of reading the latter, peeped over the top of it, and took a survey of the man of business, who was an elderly pimply-faced, vegetable-diet sort of man, in a black coat, dark mixture trousers, and small black gaiters: a kind of being who seemed to be an essential part of the desk at which he was writing, and to have as much thought or sentiment.

After a few minutes' silence, Mr. Dodson, a plump, portly, stern-looking man, with a loud voice, appeared; and the conversation commenced.

“This is Mr. Pickwick,” said Fogg.

“Ah! You are the defendant, sir, in Bardell and Pickwick?” said Dodson.

“I am, sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Well, sir,” said Dodson, “and what do you propose?”

“Ah!” said Fogg, thrusting his hands into his trousers' pockets, and throwing himself back in his chair “what do you propose, Mr. Pickwick?”

“Hush, Fogg,” said Dodson, “let me hear what Mr. Pickwick has to say.”

“I came, gentlemen,” replied Mr. Pickwick, — gazing placidly on the two partners, — “I came here, gentlemen, to express the surprise with which I received your letter of the other day, and to inquire what grounds of action you can have against me.”

“Grounds of” — Fogg had ejaculated thus much, when he was stopped by Dodson.

“Mr. Fogg,” said Dodson, “I am going to speak.”

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Dodson,” said Fogg.

“For the grounds of action, sir,” continued Dodson, with moral elevation in his air, “you will consult your own conscience and your own feelings. We, sir, we are guided entirely by the statement of our client. That statement, sir, may be true, or it may be false; it may be credible, or it may be incredible; but, if it be true, and if it be credible, I do not hesitate to say, sir, that our grounds of action, sir, are strong, and not to be shaken. You may be an unfortunate man, sir, or you may be a designing one; but if I were called upon, as a jurymen upon my oath, sir, to express an opinion of your conduct, sir, I do not hesitate to assert that I should have but one opinion about it.” Here Dodson drew himself up with an air of offended virtue, and looked at Fogg, who thrust his hands farther in his pockets, and nodding his head sagely, said, in a tone of the fullest concurrence, “Most certainly.”

“Well, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, with considerable pain depicted in his countenance, “you will permit me to assure you, that I am a most unfortunate man, so far as this case is concerned.”

“I hope you are, sir,” replied Dodson; “I trust you may be, sir. If you are really innocent of what is laid to your charge, you are more unfortunate than I had believed any man could possibly be. What do *you* say, Mr. Fogg?”

“I say precisely what you say,” replied Fogg, with a smile of incredulity.

“The writ, sir, which commences the action,” continued Dodson, “was issued regularly. Mr. Fogg, where is the *præcipe* book?”

“Here it is,” said Fogg, handing over a square book, with a parchment cover.

“Here is the entry,” resumed Dodson. “‘Middlesex, Capias *Martha Bardell, widow, v. Samuel Pickwick.* Damages £1500. Dodson and Fogg for the plaintiff, Aug. 28, 1830.’ All regular, sir; perfectly.” Dodson coughed and looked at Fogg, who said “Perfectly,” also. And then they both looked at Mr. Pickwick.

“I am to understand, then,” said Mr. Pickwick, “that it really is your intention to proceed with this action?”

“Understand, sir? — that you certainly may,” replied Dodson, with something as near a smile as his importance would allow.

“And that the damages are actually laid at fifteen hundred pounds?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“To which understanding you may add my assurance, that if we could have prevailed upon our client, they would have been laid at treble the amount, sir;” replied Dodson.

“I believe Mrs. Bardell specially said, however,” observed Fogg, glancing at Dodson, “that she would not compromise for a farthing less.”

“Unquestionably,” replied Dodson, sternly. For the action was only just begun; and it wouldn’t have done to let Mr. Pickwick compromise it then, even if he had been so disposed.

“As you offer no terms, sir,” said Dodson, displaying a slip of parchment in his right hand, and affectionately pressing a paper copy of it on Mr. Pickwick with his left, “I had better serve you with a copy of this writ, sir. Here is the original, sir.”

“Very well, gentlemen, very well,” said Mr. Pickwick, rising in person and wrath at the same time; “you shall hear from my solicitor, gentlemen.”

"We shall be very happy to do so," said Fogg, rubbing his hands.

"Very," said Dodson, opening the door.

"And before I go, gentlemen," said the excited Mr. Pickwick, turning round on the landing, "permit me to say, that of all the disgraceful and rascally proceedings"—

"Stay, sir, stay," interposed Dodson, with great politeness. "Mr. Jackson! Mr. Wicks!"

"Sir," said the two clerks, appearing at the bottom of the stairs.

"I merely want you to hear what this gentleman says," replied Dodson. "Pray go on, sir—disgraceful and rascally proceedings, I think you said?"

"I did," said Mr. Pickwick, thoroughly roused. "I said, sir, that of all the disgraceful and rascally proceedings that ever were attempted, this is the most so. I repeat it, sir."

"You hear that, Mr. Wicks?" said Dodson.

"You won't forget these expressions, Mr. Jackson?" said Fogg.

"Perhaps you would like to call us swindlers, sir," said Dodson. "Pray do, sir, if you feel disposed—now pray do, sir."

"I do," said Mr. Pickwick. "You *are* swindlers."

"Very good," said Dodson. "You can hear down there, I hope, Mr. Wicks?"

"Oh yes, sir," said Wicks.

"You had better come up a step or two higher, if you can't," added Mr. Fogg. "Go on, sir; do go on. You had better call us thieves, sir; or perhaps you would like to assault one of us. Pray do it, sir, if you would; we will not make the smallest resistance. Pray do it, sir."

As Fogg put himself very temptingly within the reach

of Mr. Pickwick's clenched fist, there is little doubt that that gentleman would have complied with his earnest entreaty, but for the interposition of Sam, who, hearing the dispute, emerged from the office, mounted the stairs, and seized his master by the arm.

"You just come away," said Mr. Weller. "Battledore and shuttlecock's a wery good game, vhen you a'n't the shuttlecock and two lawyers the battledores, in wich case it gets too excitin' to be pleasant. Come away, sir. If you want to ease your mind by blowing up somebody, come out into the court and blow up me ; but it's rayther too expensive work to be carried on here."

And without the slightest ceremony, Mr. Weller hauled his master down the stairs, and down the court, and having safely deposited him in Cornhill, fell behind, prepared to follow whithersoever he should lead.

Mr. Pickwick walked on abstractedly, crossed opposite the Mansion House, and bent his steps up Cheapside. Sam began to wonder where they were going, when his master turned round, and said :

"Sam, I will go immediately to Mr. Perker's."

"That's just exactly the wery place vere you ought to have gone last night, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"I think it is, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"I *know* it is," said Mr. Weller.

"Well, well, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, "we will go there at once ; but first, as I have been rather ruffled, I should like a glass of brandy and water warm, Sam. Where can I have it, Sam ?"

Mr. Weller's knowledge of London was extensive and peculiar. He replied, without the slightest consideration :

"Second court on the right-hand side — last house but run on the same side the vay — take the box as stands



in the first fireplace, 'cos there a'n't no leg in the middle o' the table, wich all the others has, and it's verry inconvenient."

Mr. Pickwick observed his valet's directions implicitly, and bidding Sam follow him, entered the tavern he had pointed out, where the hot brandy and water was speedily placed before him ; while Mr. Weller, seated at a respectful distance, though at the same table with his master, was accommodated with a pint of porter.

The room was one of a very homely description, and was apparently under the especial patronage of stage coachmen : for several gentlemen, who had all the appearance of belonging to that learned profession, were drinking and smoking in the different boxes. Among the number was one stout, red-faced, elderly man in particular, seated in an opposite box, who attracted Mr. Pickwick's attention. The stout man was smoking with great vehemence, but between every half-dozen puffs, he took his pipe from his mouth, and looked first at Mr. Weller and then at Mr. Pickwick. Then, he would bury in a quart-pot as much of his countenance as the dimensions of the quart-pot admitted of its receiving, and take another look at Sam and Mr. Pickwick. Then he would take another half-dozen puffs with an air of profound meditation, and look at them again. At last the stout man, putting up his legs on the seat, and leaning his back against the wall, began to puff at his pipe without leaving off at all, and to stare through the smoke at the new comers, as if he had made up his mind to see the most he could of them.

At first the evolutions of the stout man had escaped Mr. Weller's observation, but by degrees, as he saw Mr. Pickwick's eyes every now and then turning towards him,

he began to gaze in the same direction, at the same time shading his eyes with his hand, as if he partially recognized the object before him, and wished to make quite sure of its identity. His doubts were speedily dispelled, however; for the stout man having blown a thick cloud from his pipe, a hoarse voice, like some strange effort of ventriloquism, emerged from beneath the capacious shawls which muffled his throat and chest, and slowly uttered these sounds — “Wy, Sammy!”

“Who’s that, Sam?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“Why, I wouldn’t ha’ believed it, sir,” replied Mr. Weller, with astonished eyes. “It’s the old ’un.”

“Old one,” said Mr. Pickwick. “What old one?”

“My father, sir,” replied Mr. Weller. “How are you, my ancient?” With which beautiful ebullition of filial affection, Mr. Weller made room on the seat beside him for the stout man, who advanced, pipe in mouth and pot in hand, to greet him.

“Wy, Sammy,” said the father, “I ha’n’t seen you for two year and better.”

“Nor more you have, old codger,” replied the son. “How’s mother-in-law?”

“Wy, I’ll tell you what, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, senior, with much solemnity in his manner; “there never was a nicer woman as a widder than that ’ere second wentur o’ mine — a sweet creetur she was, Sammy; all I can say on her now is, that as she was such an uncommon pleasant widder, it’s a great pity she ever changed her con-dition. She don’t act as a wife, Sammy.”

“Don’t she, though?” inquired Mr. Weller, junior.

The elder Mr. Weller shook his head, as he replied with a sigh, “I’ve done it once too often, Sammy; I’ve done it once too often. Take example by your father,

my boy, and be wery careful o' widders all your life, specially if they've kept a public-house, Sammy." Having delivered this parental advice with great pathos, Mr. Weller senior refilled his pipe from a tin box he carried in his pocket; and lighting his fresh pipe from the ashes of the old one, commenced smoking at a great rate.

"Beg your pardon, sir," he said, renewing the subject, and addressing Mr. Pickwick, after a considerable pause, "nothin' personal, I hope, sir; I hope you ha'n't got a widder, sir."

"Not I," replied Mr. Pickwick, laughing; and while Mr. Pickwick laughed, Sam Weller informed his parent in a whisper, of the relation in which he stood towards that gentleman.

"Beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Weller, senior, taking off his hat, "I hope you've no fault to find with Sammy, sir."

"None whatever," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Wery glad to hear it, sir," replied the old man; "I took a good deal o' pains with his eddication, sir; let him run in the streets when he was wery young, and shift for his-self. It's the only way to make a boy sharp, sir."

"Rather a dangerous process, I should imagine," said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"And not a wery sure one, neither," added Mr. Weller; "I got reg'larly done the other day."

"No!" said the father.

"I did," said the son; and he proceeded to relate in as few words as possible, how he had fallen a ready dupe to the stratagems of Job Trotter.

Mr. Weller senior listened to the tale with the most profound attention, and, at its termination, said—

“Worn’t one o’ these chaps slim and tall, with long hair, and the gift o’ the gab wery gallopin’?”

Mr. Pickwick did not quite understand the last item of description, but, comprehending the first, said “Yes,” at a venture.

“T’other’s a black-haired chap in mulberry livery, with a wery large head?”

“Yes, yes, he is,” said Mr. Pickwick and Sam, with great earnestness.

“Then I know where they are, and that’s all about it,” said Mr. Weller; “they’re at Ipswich, safe enough, them two.”

“No!” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Fact,” said Mr. Weller, “and I’ll tell you how I know it. I work an Ipswich coach now and then for a friend o’ mine. I worked down the wery day arter the night as you caught the rheumatiz, and at the Black Boy at Chelmsford — the wery place they’d come to — I took ’em up, right through to Ipswich, where the man servant — him in the mulberries — told me they was a goin’ to put up for a long time.”

“I’ll follow him,” said Mr. Pickwick; “we may as well see Ipswich as any other place. I’ll follow him.”

“You’re quite certain it was them, governor?” inquired Mr. Weller, junior.

“Quite, Sammy, quite,” replied his father, “for their appearance is wery sing’ler; besides that ’ere, I wondered to see the gen’l’m’n so formiliar with his servant; and, more than that, as they sat in front, right behind the box, I heerd ’em laughing, and saying how they’d done old Fireworks.”

“Old who?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Old Fireworks, sir, by which, I’ve no doubt, they meant you, sir.”

There is nothing positively vile or atrocious in the appellation of "old Fireworks," but still it is by no means a respectful or flattering designation. The recollection of all the wrongs he had sustained at Jingle's hands, had crowded on Mr. Pickwick's mind, the moment Mr. Weller began to speak : it wanted but a feather to turn the scale, and "old Fireworks" did it.

"I'll follow him," said Mr. Pickwick, with an emphatic blow on the table.

"I shall work down to Ipswich the day arter to-morrow, sir," said Mr. Weller the elder, "from the Bull in Whitechapel ; and if you really mean go, "you'd better go with me."

"So we had," said Mr. Pickwick ; "very true ; I can write to Bury, and tell them to meet me at Ipswich. We will go with you. But don't hurry away, Mr. Weller ; won't you take anything?"

"You're wery good, sir," replied Mr. W., stopping short — "perhaps a small glass of brandy to drink your health, and success to Sammy, sir, wouldn't be amiss."

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Pickwick. "A glass of brandy here!" The brandy was brought : and Mr. Weller, after pulling his hair to Mr. Pickwick, and nodding to Sam, jerked it down his capacious throat as if it had been a small thimble-full.

"Well done, father," said Sam, "take care, old fellow, or you'll have a touch of your old complaint, the gout."

"I've found a sov'r'i'n cure for that, Sammy," replied Mr. Weller, setting down the glass.

"A sovereign cure for the gout," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily producing his note-book, "what is it?"

"The gout, sir," replied Mr. Weller, "the gout is a complaint as arises from too much ease and comfort. If

ever you're attacked with the gout, sir, jist you marry a widder as has got a good loud voice, with a decent notion of usin' it, and you'll never have the gout agin. It's a capital prescription, sir. I takes it reg'lar, and I can warrant it to drive away any illness as is caused by too much jollity." Having imparted this valuable secret, Mr. Weller drained his glass once more, produced a labored wink, sighed deeply, and slowly retired.

"Well, what do you think of what your father says, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick, with a smile.

"Think, sir!" replied Mr. Weller; "why, I think he's the victim o' connubiality, as Blue Beard's domestic chaplain said, with a tear of pity, ven he buried him."

There was no replying to this very apposite conclusion, and, therefore, Mr. Pickwick, after settling the reckoning, resumed his walk to Gray's Inn. By the time he reached its secluded groves, however, eight o'clock had struck, and the unbroken stream of gentlemen in muddy high-lows, soiled white hats, and rusty apparel, who were pouring towards the different avenues of egress, warned him that the majority of the offices had closed for that day.

After climbing two pairs of steep and dirty stairs, he found his anticipations were realized. Mr. Perker's "outer door" was closed; and the dead silence which followed Mr. Weller's repeated kicks thereat, announced that the officials had retired from business for the night.

"This is pleasant, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick; "I shouldn't lose an hour in seeing him; I shall not be able to get one wink of sleep to-night, I know, unless I have the satisfaction of reflecting that I have confided this matter to a professional man."

"Here's an old 'ooman comin' up-stairs, sir," replied

Mr. Weller ; “p'r'aps she knows where we can find somebody. Hallo, old lady, vere's Mr. Perker's people ?”

“Mr. Perker's people,” said a thin, miserable-looking old woman, stopping to recover breath after the ascent of the staircase, “Mr. Perker's people's gone, and I'm a goin' to do the office out.”

“Are you Mr. Perker's servant ?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“I am Mr. Perker's laundress,” replied the old woman.

“Ah,” said Mr. Pickwick, half aside to Sam, “it's a curious circumstance, Sam, that they call the old women in these inns, laundresses. I wonder what that's for.”

“'Cos they has a mortal awersion to washing anv-thin', I suppose, sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“I shouldn't wonder,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking at the old woman, whose appearance as well as the condition of the office, which she had by this time opened, indicated a rooted antipathy to the application of soap and water ; “do you know where I can find Mr. Perker, my good woman ?”

“No, I don't,” replied the old woman, gruffly ; “he's out o' town now.”

“That's unfortunate,” said Mr. Pickwick ; “where's his clerk — do you know ?”

“Yes, I know where he is, but he wouldn't thank me for telling you,” replied the laundress.

“I have very particular business with him,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Won't it do in the morning ?” said the woman.

“Not so well,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Well,” said the old woman, “if it was anything very particular, I was to say where he was, so I suppose

there's no harm in telling. If you just go to the Magpie and Stump, and ask at the bar for Mr. Lowten, they'll show you in to him, and he's Mr. Perker's clerk."

With this direction, and having been furthermore informed that the hostelry in question was situated in a court, happy in the double advantage of being in the vicinity of Clare Market, and closely approximating to the back of New Inn, Mr. Pickwick and Sam descended the rickety staircase in safety, and issued forth in quest of the Magpie and Stump.

This favored tavern, sacred to the evening orgies of Mr. Lowten and his companions, was what ordinary people would designate a public-house. That the landlord was a man of a money-making turn, was sufficiently testified by the fact of a small bulkhead beneath the tap-room window, in size and shape not unlike a sedan-chair, being underlet to a mender of shoes : and that he was a being of a philanthropic mind, was evident from the protection he afforded to a pie-man, who vended his delicacies without fear of interruption, on the very door-step. In the lower windows, which were decorated with curtains of a saffron hue, dangled two or three printed cards, bearing reference to Devonshire cider and Dantzic spruce, while a large black board, announcing in white letters to an enlightened public, that there were 500,000 barrels of double stout in the cellars of the establishment, left the mind in a state of not unpleasing doubt and uncertainty, as to the precise direction in the bowels of the earth, in which this mighty cavern might be supposed to extend. When we add, that the weather-beaten sign-board bore the half-obliterated semblance of a magpie intently eying a crooked streak of brown paint, which the neighbors had been taught from infancy to



consider as the "stump," we have said all that need be said, of the exterior of the edifice.

"On Mr. Pickwick's presenting himself at the bar, an elderly female emerged from behind a screen therein, and presented herself before him.

"Is Mr. Lowten here, ma'am?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes he is, sir," replied the landlady. "Here, Charley, show the gentleman in, to Mr. Lowten."

"The gen'l'm'n can't go in, just now," said a shambling pot-boy, with a red head, "'cos Mr. Lowten's a-singin' a comic song, and he'll put him out. He'll be done, d'irectly sir."

The red-headed pot-boy had scarcely finished speaking, when a most unanimous hammering of tables, and jingling of glasses, announced that the song had that instant terminated; and Mr. Pickwick, after desiring Sam to solace himself in the tap, suffered himself to be conducted into the presence of Mr. Lowten.

At the announcement of "gentleman to speak to you, sir," a puffy-faced young man who filled the chair at the head of the table, looked with some surprise in the direction from whence the voice proceeded: and the surprise seemed to be by no means diminished, when his eyes rested on an individual whom he had never seen before.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, "and I am very sorry to disturb the other gentlemen, too, but I come on very particular business; and if you will suffer me to detain you at this end of the room for five minutes, I shall be very much obliged to you."

The puffy-faced young man rose, and drawing a chair close to Mr. Pickwick in an obscure corner of the room, listened attentively to his tale of woe.

“Ah,” he said, when Mr. Pickwick had concluded, “Dodson and Fogg — sharp practice theirs — capital men of business, Dodson and Fogg, sir.”

Mr. Pickwick admitted the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg, and Lowten resumed.

“Perker a’n’t in town, and he won’t be neither, before the end of next week; but if you want the action defended, and will leave the copy with me, I can do all that’s needful till he comes back.”

“That’s exactly what I came here for,” said Mr. Pickwick, handing over the document. “If anything particular occurs, you can write to me at the post-office, Ipswich.”

“That’s all right,” replied Mr. Perker’s clerk; and then seeing Mr. Pickwick’s eye wandering curiously towards the table, he added, “Will you join us, for half-an-hour or so? We are capital company here to-night. There’s Samkin and Green’s managing-clerk, and Smithers and Price’s chancery, and Pimkin and Thomas’s out o’ door — sings a capital song, he does — and Jack Bamber, and ever so many more. You’re come out of the country, I suppose. Would you like to join us?”

Mr. Pickwick could not resist so tempting an opportunity of studying human nature. He suffered himself to be led to the table, where, after having been introduced to the company in due form, he was accommodated with a seat near the chairman, and called for a glass of his favorite beverage.

A profound silence, quite contrary to Mr. Pickwick’s expectation, succeeded.

“You don’t find this sort of thing disagreeable, I hope, sir?” said his right hand neighbor, a gentleman in a checked shirt, and Mosaic studs, with a cigar in his mouth.

“Not in the least,” replied Mr. Pickwick, “I like it very much, although I am no smoker myself.”

“I should be very sorry to say I wasn’t,” interposed another gentleman on the opposite side of the table. “It’s board and lodging to me, is smoke.”

Mr. Pickwick glanced at the speaker, and thought that if it were washing too, it would be all the better.

Here there was another pause. Mr. Pickwick was a stranger, and his coming had evidently cast a damp upon the party.

“Mr. Grundy’s going to oblige the company with a song,” said the chairman.

“No he a’n’t,” said Mr. Grundy.

“Why not?” said the chairman.

“Because he can’t,” said Mr. Grundy.

“You had better say he won’t,” replied the chairman.

“Well, then, he won’t,” retorted Mr. Grundy. Mr. Grundy’s positive refusal to gratify the company, occasioned another silence.

“Won’t anybody enliven us?” said the chairman despondingly.

“Why don’t you enliven us yourself, Mr. Chairman?” said a young man with a whisker, a squint, and an open shirt collar (dirty), from the bottom of the table.

“Hear! hear!” said the smoking gentleman in the Mosaic jewelry.

“Because I only know one song, and I have sung it already, and it’s a fine of ‘glasses round’ to sing the same song twice in a night,” replied the chairman.

This was an unanswerable reply, and silence prevailed again.

“I have been to-night, gentlemen,” said Mr. Pickwick, hoping to start a subject which all the company

could take a part in discussing, "I have been to-night in a place which you all know very well, doubtless, but which I have not been in before, for some years, and know very little of; I mean Gray's Inn, gentlemen. Curious little nooks in a great place, like London, these old inns are."

"By Jove," said the chairman, whispering across the table to Mr. Pickwick, "you have hit upon something that one of us, at least, would talk upon forever. You'll draw old Jack Bamber out; he was never heard to talk about anything else but the Inns, and he has lived alone in them, till he's half crazy."

The individual to whom Lowten alluded, was a little yellow high-shouldered man, whose countenance, from his habit of stooping forward when silent, Mr. Pickwick had not observed before. He wondered though, when the old man raised his shrivelled face, and bent his gray eye upon him, with a keen inquiring look, that such remarkable features could have escaped his attention for a moment. There was a fixed grim smile perpetually on his countenance; he leant his chin on a long skinny hand, with nails of extraordinary length; and as he inclined his head to one side, and looked keenly out from beneath his ragged gray eyebrows, there was a strange, wild slyness in his leer, quite repulsive to behold.

This was the figure that now started forward, and burst into an animated torrent of words. As this chapter has been a long one however, and as the old man was a remarkable personage, it will be more respectful to him, and more convenient to us, to let him speak for himself in a fresh one.

## CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH THE OLD MAN LAUNCHES FORTH INTO HIS FAVORITE THEME, AND RELATES A STORY ABOUT A QUEER CLIENT.

“AHA!” said the old man, a brief description of whose manner and appearance concluded the last chapter. “Aha! who was talking about the Inns?”

“I was, sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick — “I was observing what singular old places they are.”

“*You!*” said the old man, contemptuously, “What do *you* know of the time when young men shut themselves up in those lonely rooms, and read and read, hour after hour, and night after night, till their reason wandered beneath their midnight studies; till their mental powers were exhausted; till morning’s light brought no freshness or health to them; and they sunk beneath the unnatural devotion of their youthful energies to their dry old books? Coming down to a later time, and a very different day, what do *you* know of the gradual sinking beneath consumption, or the quick wasting of fever — the grand results of ‘life’ and dissipation — which men have undergone in those same rooms? How many vain pleaders for mercy, do you think have turned away heart-sick from the lawyer’s office, to find a resting-place in the Thames, or a refuge in the jail? They are no

ordinary houses, those. There is not a panel in the old wainscoting, but what, if it were endowed with the powers of speech and memory, could start from the wall, and tell its tale of horror — the romance of life, sir, the romance of life! Commonplace as they may seem now, I tell you they are strange old places, and I would rather hear many a legend with a terrific sounding name, than the true history of one old set of chambers.”

There was something so odd in the old man's sudden energy, and the subject which had called it forth, that Mr. Pickwick was prepared with no observation in reply; and the old man checking his impetuosity, and resuming the leer, which had disappeared during his previous excitement, said:

“Look at them in another light: their most commonplace and least romantic. What fine places of slow torture they are! Think of the needy man who has spent his all, beggared himself and pinched his friends, to enter the profession, which will never yield him a morsel of bread. The waiting — the hope — the disappointment — the fear — the misery — the poverty — the blight on his hopes, and end to his career — the suicide perhaps, or the shabby, slipshod drunkard. Am I not right about them?” And the old man rubbed his hands, and leered as if in delight at having found another point of view in which to place his favorite subject.

Mr. Pickwick eyed the old man with great curiosity, and the remainder of the company smiled, and looked on in silence.

“Talk of your German universities,” said the little old man. “Pooh, pooh! there's romance enough at home without going half a mile for it; only people never think of it.”

“I never thought of the romance of this particular subject before, certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick, laughing.

“To be sure you didn’t,” said the little old man, “of course not. As a friend of mine used to say to me, ‘What is there in chambers in particular?’ ‘Queer old places,’ said I. ‘Not at all,’ said he. ‘Lonely,’ said I. ‘Not a bit of it,’ said he. He died one morning of apoplexy, as he was going to open his outer door. Fell with his head in his own letter-box, and there he lay for eighteen months. Everybody thought he’d gone out of town.”

“And how was he found at last?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“The benchers determined to have his door broken open, as he hadn’t paid any rent for two years. So they did. Forced the lock; and a very dusty skeleton in a blue coat, black knee-shorts, and silks, fell forward in the arms of the porter who opened the door. Queer, that. Rather, perhaps?” The little old man put his head more on one side, and rubbed his hands with unspeakable glee.

“I know another case,” said the little old man, when his chuckles had in some degree subsided — “It occurred in Clifford’s Inn. Tenant of a top set — bad character — shut himself up in his bedroom closet, and took a dose of arsenic. The steward thought he had run away; opened the door, and put a bill up. Another man came, took the chambers, furnished them, and went to live there. Somehow or other he couldn’t sleep — always restless and uncomfortable. ‘Odd,’ says he. ‘I’ll make the other room my bedchamber, and this my sitting-room.’ He made the change, and slept very well at night, but suddenly found that, somehow, he couldn’t

read in the evening : he got nervous and uncomfortable, and used to be always snuffing his candles and staring about him. ‘I can’t make this out,’ said he, when he came home from the play one night, and was drinking a glass of cold grog, with his back to the wall, in order that he mightn’t be able to fancy there was any one behind him — ‘I can’t make it out,’ said he ; and just then his eyes rested on the little closet that had been always locked up, and a shudder ran through his whole frame from top to toe. ‘I have felt this strange feeling before,’ said he, ‘I cannot help thinking there’s something wrong about that closet.’ He made a strong effort, plucked up his courage, shivered the lock with a blow or two of the poker, opened the door, and there, sure enough, standing bolt upright in the corner, was the last tenant, with a little bottle clasped firmly in his hand, and his face — well !” As the little old man concluded, he looked round on the attentive faces of his wondering auditory with a smile of grim delight.

“What strange things these are you tell us of, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, minutely scanning the old man’s countenance, by the aid of his glasses.

“Strange !” said the little old man. “Nonsense ; you think them strange, because you know nothing about it. They are funny, but not uncommon.”

“Funny !” exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, involuntarily.

“Yes, funny, are they not ?” replied the little old man, with a diabolical leer ; and then, without pausing for an answer, he continued —

“I knew another man — let me see — It’s forty years ago now — who took an old, damp, rotten set of chambers, in one of the most ancient Inns, that had been shut up and empty for years and years before. There were



lots of old women's stories about the place, and it certainly was very far from being a cheerful one ; but he was poor, and the rooms were cheap, and that would have been quite a sufficient reason for him, if they had been ten times worse than they really were. He was obliged to take some mouldering fixtures that were on the place, and, among the rest, was a great lumbering wooden press for papers, with large glass doors, and a green curtain inside ; a pretty useless thing for him, for he had no papers to put in it ; and as to his clothes, he carried them about with him, and that wasn't very hard work, either. Well, he had moved in all his furniture — it wasn't quite a truck-full — and had sprinkled it about the room, so as to make the four chairs look as much like a dozen as possible, and was sitting down before the fire at night, drinking the first glass of two gallons of whiskey, he had ordered on credit, wondering whether it would ever be paid for, and if so, in how many years' time, when his eyes encountered the glass doors of the wooden press. 'Ah!' says he — 'If I hadn't been obliged to take that ugly article at the old broker's valuation, I might have got something comfortable for the money. I'll tell you what it is, old fellow,' he said, speaking aloud to the press, having nothing else to speak to — 'If it wouldn't cost more to break up your old carcass, than it would ever be worth afterwards, I'd have a fire out of you, in less than no time.' He had hardly spoken the words, when a sound resembling a faint groan, appeared to issue from the interior of the case. It startled him at first, but thinking, on a moment's reflection, that it must be some young fellow in the next chambers, who had been dining out, he put his feet on the fender, and raised the poker to stir the fire. At that moment, the

sound was repeated: and one of the glass doors slowly opening, disclosed a pale and emaciated figure in soiled and worn apparel, standing erect in the press. The figure was tall and thin, and the countenance expressive of care and anxiety; but there was something in the hue of the skin, and gaunt and unearthly appearance of the whole form, which no being of this world was ever seen to wear. 'Who are you?' said the new tenant, turning very pale: poising the poker in his hand, however, and taking a very decent aim at the countenance of the figure — 'Who are you?' 'Don't throw that poker at me,' replied the form — 'If you hurled it with ever so sure an aim, it would pass through me, without resistance, and expend its force on the wood behind. I am a spirit.' 'And, pray, what do you want here?' faltered the tenant. 'In this room,' replied the apparition, 'my worldly ruin was worked, and I and my children beggared. In this press, the papers in a long, long suit, which accumulated for years, were deposited. In this room, when I had died of grief, and long-deferred hope, two wily harpies divided the wealth for which I had contested during a wretched existence, and of which, at last, not one farthing was left for my unhappy descendants. I terrified them from the spot, and since that day have prowled by night — the only period at which I can revisit the earth — about the scenes of my long-protracted misery. This apartment is mine: leave it to me.' 'If you insist upon making your appearance here,' said the tenant, who had had time to collect his presence of mind during this prosy statement of the ghost's — 'I shall give up possession with the greatest pleasure; but I should like to ask you one question, if you will allow me.' 'Say on,' said the apparition, sternly. 'Well,' said the tenant, 'I don't apply the

observation personally to you, because it is equally applicable to most of the ghosts I ever heard of; but it does appear to me, somewhat inconsistent, that when you have an opportunity of visiting the fairest spots of earth — for I suppose space is nothing to you — you should always return exactly to the very places where you have been most miserable.’ ‘Egad, that’s very true; I never thought of that before,’ said the ghost. ‘You see, sir,’ pursued the tenant, ‘this is a very uncomfortable room. From the appearance of that press, I should be disposed to say that it is not wholly free from bugs; and I really think you might find much more comfortable quarters: to say nothing of the climate of London, which is extremely disagreeable.’ ‘You are very right, sir,’ said the ghost, politely, ‘it never struck me till now; I’ll try change of air directly’ — and, in fact, he began to vanish as he spoke: his legs, indeed, had quite disappeared. ‘And if, sir,’ said the tenant, calling after him, ‘if you *would* have the goodness to suggest to the other ladies and gentlemen who are now engaged in haunting old empty houses, that they might be much more comfortable elsewhere, you will confer a very great benefit on society.’ ‘I will,’ replied the ghost; ‘we must be dull fellows — very dull fellows, indeed; I can’t imagine how we can have been so stupid.’ With these words, the spirit disappeared; and what is rather remarkable,” added the old man, with a shrewd look round the table, “he never came back again.”

“That a’n’t bad, if it’s true,” said the man in the Mo-saic studs, lighting a fresh cigar.

“*If!*” exclaimed the old man, with a look of excessive contempt. “I suppose,” he added, turning to Lowten, “he’ll say next, that my story about the queer client

we had, when I was in an attorney's office, is not true, either — I shouldn't wonder."

"I sha'n't venture to say anything at all about it, seeing that I never heard the story," observed the owner of the Mosaic decorations.

"I wish you would repeat it, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah, do," said Lowten, "nobody has heard it but me, and I have nearly forgotten it."

The old man looked round the table, and leered more horribly than ever, as if in triumph at the attention which was depicted in every face. Then rubbing his chin with his hand, and looking up to the ceiling as if to recall the circumstances to his memory, he began as follows :

#### THE OLD MAN'S TALE ABOUT THE QUEER CLIENT.

"It matters little," said the old man, "where, or how, I picked up this brief history. If I were to relate it in the order in which it reached me, I should commence in the middle, and when I had arrived at the conclusion, go back for a beginning. It is enough for me to say that some of its circumstances passed before my own eyes. For the remainder I know them to have happened, and there are some persons yet living, who will remember them but too well.

"In the Borough High Street, near Saint George's Church, and on the same side of the way, stands, as most people know, the smallest of our debtors' prisons — the Marshalsea. Although in later times it has been a very different place from the sink of filth and dirt it

once was, even its improved condition holds out but little temptation to the extravagant or consolation to the improvident. The condemned felon has a good yard for air and exercise in Newgate, as the insolvent debtor in the Marshalsea Prison.\*

“It may be my fancy, or it may be that I cannot separate the place from the old recollections associated with it, but this part of London I cannot bear. The street is broad, the shops are spacious, the noise of passing vehicles, the footsteps of a perpetual stream of people — all the busy sounds of traffic, resound in it from morn to midnight, but the streets around, are mean and close; poverty and debauchery lie festering in the crowded alleys; want and misfortune are pent up in the narrow prison; an air of gloom and dreariness seems, in my eyes at least, to hang about the scene, and to impart to it, a squalid and sickly hue.

“Many eyes, that have long since been closed in the grave, have looked round upon that scene lightly enough, when entering the gate of the old Marshalsea Prison for the first time: for despair seldom comes with the first severe shock of misfortune. A man has confidence in untried friends, he remembers the many offers of service so freely made by his boon companions when he wanted them not; he has hope — the hope of happy inexperience — and however he may bend beneath the first shock, it springs up in his bosom, and flourishes there for a brief space, until it droops beneath the blight of disappointment and neglect. How soon have those same eyes, deeply sunken in the head, glared from faces wasted with famine, and sallow from confinement, in days

\* Better. But this is past, in a better age, and the prison exists no longer.

when it was no figure of speech to say that debtors rotted in prison, with no hope of release, and no prospect of liberty! The atrocity in its full extent no longer exists, but there is enough of it left, to give rise to occurrences that make the heart bleed.

“Twenty years ago, that pavement was worn with the footsteps of a mother and child, who, day by day, so surely as the morning came, presented themselves at the prison gate; often after a night of restless misery and anxious thoughts, were they there, a full hour too soon, and then the young mother turning meekly away, would lead the child to the old bridge, and raising him in her arms to show him the glistening water, tinted with the light of the morning’s sun, and stirring with all the bustling preparations for business and pleasure that the river presented at that early hour, endeavor to interest his thoughts in the objects before him. But she would quickly set him down, and hiding her face in her shawl, give vent to the tears that blinded her; for no expression of interest or amusement lighted up his thin and sickly face. His recollections were few enough, but they were all of one kind — all connected with the poverty and misery of his parents. Hour after hour, had he sat on his mother’s knee, and with childish sympathy watched the tears that stole down her face, and then crept quietly away into some dark corner, and sobbed himself to sleep. The hard realities of the world, with many of its worst privations — hunger and thirst, and cold and want — had all come home to him, from the first dawnings of reason: and though the form of childhood was there, its light heart, its merry laugh, and sparkling eyes, were wanting.

“The father and mother looked on upon this, and

upon each other, with thoughts of agony they dared not breathe in words. The healthy, strong-made man, who could have borne almost any fatigue of active exertion, was wasting beneath the close confinement and unhealthy atmosphere of a crowded prison. The slight and delicate woman was sinking beneath the combined effects of bodily and mental illness. The child's young heart was breaking.

“Winter came, and with it weeks of cold and heavy rain. The poor girl had removed to a wretched apartment close to the spot of her husband's imprisonment; and though the change had been rendered necessary by their increasing poverty, she was happier now, for she was nearer him. For two months, she and her little companion watched the opening of the gate as usual. One day she failed to come, for the first time. Another morning arrived, and she came alone. The child was dead.

“They little know, who coldly talk of the poor man's bereavements, as a happy release from pain to the departed, and a merciful relief from expense to the survivor — they little know, I say, what the agony of those bereavements is. A silent look of affection and regard when all other eyes are turned coldly away — the consciousness that we possess the sympathy and affection of one being when all others have deserted us — is a hold, a stay, a comfort in the deepest affliction, which no wealth could purchase, or power bestow. The child had sat at his parents' feet for hours together, with his little hands patiently folded in each other, and his thin wan face raised towards them. They had seen him pine away, from day to day; and though his brief existence had been a joyless one, and he was now removed to that

peace and rest which, child as he was, he had never known in this world, they were his parents, and his loss sunk deep into their souls.

“It was plain to those who looked upon the mother’s altered face that death must soon close the scene of her adversity and trial. Her husband’s fellow-prisoners shrunk from obtruding on his grief and misery, and left to himself alone, the small room he had previously occupied in common with two companions. She shared it with him: and lingering on without pain, but without hope, her life ebbed slowly away.

“She had fainted one evening in her husband’s arms, and he had borne her to the open window, to revive her with the air, when the light of the moon falling full upon her face, showed him a change upon her features, which made him stagger beneath her weight, like a helpless infant.

“‘Set me down, George,’ she said faintly. He did so, and seating himself beside her, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

“‘It is very hard to leave you, George,’ she said, ‘but it is God’s will, and you must bear it for my sake. Oh! how I thank him for having taken our boy. He is happy, and in Heaven now. What would he have done here, without his mother!’

“‘You shall not die, Mary, you shall not die;’ said the husband, starting up. He paced hurriedly to and fro, striking his head with his clenched fist; then reseating himself beside her, and supporting her in his arms, added more calmly, ‘Rouse yourself, my dear girl — pray, pray do. You will revive yet.’

“‘Never again, George; never again’ — said the dying woman. ‘Let them lay me by my poor boy now, but



promise me, that if ever you leave this dreadful place, and should grow rich, you will have us removed to some quiet country church-yard, a long, long way off — very far from here, where we can rest in peace. Dear George, promise me you will.'

" 'I do, I do,' said the man, throwing himself passionately on his knees before her. 'Speak to me, Mary, another word ; one look — but one !' —

" He ceased to speak : for the arm that clasped his neck, grew stiff and heavy. A deep sigh escaped from the wasted form before him ; the lips moved, and a smile played upon the face, but the lips were pallid, and the smile faded into a rigid and ghastly stare. He was alone in the world.

" That night, in the silence and desolation of his miserable room, the wretched man knelt down by the dead body of his wife, and called on God to witness a terrible oath, that from that hour, he devoted himself to revenge her death and that of his child ; that thenceforth to the last moment of his life, his whole energies should be directed to this one object ; that his revenge should be protracted and terrible ; that his hatred should be undying and inextinguishable ; and should hunt its object through the world.

" The deepest despair, and passion scarcely human, had made such fierce ravages on his face and form, in that one night, that his companions in misfortune shrunk affrighted from him as he passed by. His eyes were bloodshot and heavy, his face a deadly white, and his body bent as if with age. He had bitten his under lip nearly through in the violence of his mental suffering, and the blood which had flowed from the wound had trickled down his chin, and stained his shirt and neck-

erchief. No tear, or sound of complaint escaped him ; but the unsettled look, and disordered haste with which he paced up and down the yard, denoted the fever which was burning within.

“ It was necessary that his wife’s body should be removed from the prison, without delay. He received the communication with perfect calmness, and acquiesced in its propriety. Nearly all the inmates of the prison had assembled to witness its removal ; they fell back on either side when the widower appeared ; he walked hurriedly forward, and stationed himself, alone, in a little railed area close to the lodge gate, from whence the crowd, with an instinctive feeling of delicacy had retired. The rude coffin was borne slowly forward on men’s shoulders. A dead silence pervaded the throng, broken only by the audible lamentations of the women, and the shuffling steps of the bearers on the stone pavement. They reached the spot where the bereaved husband stood : and stopped. He laid his hand upon the coffin, and mechanically adjusting the pall with which it was covered, motioned them onward. The turnkeys in the prison lobby took off their hats as it passed through, and in another moment the heavy gate closed behind it. He looked vacantly upon the crowd, and fell heavily to the ground.

“ Although for many weeks after this, he was watched night and day, in the wildest ravings of fever, neither the consciousness of his loss, nor the recollection of the vow he had made, ever left him for a moment. Scenes changed before his eyes, place succeeded place, and event followed event, in all the hurry of delirium ; but they were all connected in some way with the great object of his mind. He was sailing over a boundless expanse

of sea, with a blood-red sky above, and the angry waters, lashed into fury beneath, boiling and eddying up, on every side. There was another vessel before them, toiling and laboring in the howling storm: her canvas fluttering in ribbons from the mast, and her deck thronged with figures who were lashed to the sides, over which huge waves every instant burst, sweeping away some devoted creatures into the foaming sea. Onward they bore, amidst the roaring mass of water, with a speed and force which nothing could resist; and striking the stern of the foremost vessel, crushed her, beneath their keel. From the huge whirlpool which the sinking wreck occasioned, arose a shriek so loud and shrill — the death-cry of a hundred drowning creatures, blended into one fierce yell — that it rung far above the war-cry of the elements, and echoed and reëchoed till it seemed to pierce air, sky, and ocean. But what was that — that old gray-head that rose above the water's surface, and with looks of agony, and screams for aid, buffeted with the waves! One look, and he had sprung from the vessel's side, and with vigorous strokes was swimming towards it. He reached it: he was close upon it. They were *his* features. The old man saw him coming, and vainly strove to elude his grasp. But he clasped him tight, and dragged him beneath the water. Down, down with him, fifty fathoms down; his struggles grew fainter and fainter, until they wholly ceased. He was dead; he had killed him, and had kept his oath.

“He was traversing the scorching sands of a mighty desert, barefoot and alone. The sand choked and blinded him; its fine thin grains entered the very pores of his skin, and irritated him almost to madness. Gigantic masses of the same material carried forward by

the wind, and shone through by the burning sun, stalked in the distance like pillars of living fire. The bones of men, who had perished in the dreary waste, lay scattered at his feet; a fearful light fell on everything around; so far as the eye could reach, nothing but objects of dread and horror presented themselves. Vainly striving to utter a cry of terror, with his tongue cleaving to his mouth, he rushed madly forward. Armed with supernatural strength, he waded through the sand, until exhausted with fatigue and thirst, he fell senseless on the earth. What fragrant coolness revived him; what gushing sound was that? Water! It was indeed a well; and the clear fresh stream was running at his feet. He drank deeply of it, and throwing his aching limbs upon the bank, sunk into a delicious trance. The sound of approaching footsteps roused him. An old gray-headed man tottered forward to slake his burning thirst. It was *he* again! He wound his arms round the old man's body, and held him back. He struggled, and shrieked for water — for but one drop of water to save his life! But he held the old man firmly, and watched his agonies with greedy eyes; and when his lifeless head fell forward on his bosom, he rolled the corpse from him with his feet.

“When the fever left him, and consciousness returned, he awoke to find himself rich and free: to hear that the parent who would have let him die in jail — *would!* who *had* let those who were far dearer to him than his own existence, die of want and the sickness of heart that medicine cannot cure — had been found, dead on his bed of down. He had had all the heart to leave his son a beggar, but proud even of his health and strength, had put off the act till it was too late, and now might

gnash his teeth in the other world, at the thought of the wealth his remissness had left him. He awoke to this, and he awoke to more. To recollect the purpose for which he lived, and to remember that his enemy was his wife's own father — the man who had cast him into prison, and who, when his daughter and her child sued at his feet for mercy, had spurned them from his door. Oh, how he cursed the weakness that prevented him from being up and active, in his scheme of vengeance !

“ He caused himself to be carried from the scene of his loss and misery, and conveyed to a quiet residence on the sea-coast — not in the hope of recovering his peace of mind or happiness, for both were fled forever ; but to restore his prostrate energies, and meditate on his darling object. And here, some evil spirit cast in his way the opportunity for his first, most horrible revenge.

“ It was summer time ; and wrapped in his gloomy thoughts, he would issue from his solitary lodgings early in the evening, and wandering along a narrow path beneath the cliffs, to a wild and lonely spot that had struck his fancy in his ramblings, seat himself on some fallen fragments of the rock, and burying his face in his hands, remain there for hours — sometimes until night had completely closed in, and the long shadows of the frowning cliffs above his head, cast a thick black darkness on every object near him.

“ He was seated here, one calm evening in his old position, now and then raising his head, to watch the flight of a sea-gull, or carry his eye along the glorious crimson path, which, commencing in the middle of the ocean, seemed to lead to its very verge where the sun was setting, when the profound stillness of the spot was broken

by a loud cry for help ; he listened, doubtful of his having heard aright, when the cry was repeated with even greater vehemence than before, and, starting to his feet, he hastened in the direction whence it proceeded.

“ The tale told itself at once : some scattered garments lay on the beach ; a human head was just visible above the waves at a little distance from the shore ; and an old man, wringing his hands in agony, was running to and fro, shrieking for assistance. The invalid, whose strength was now sufficiently restored, threw off his coat, and rushed towards the sea, with the intention of plunging in, and dragging the drowning man ashore.

“ ‘ Hasten here, sir, in God’s name ; help, help, sir, for the love of Heaven. He is my son, sir, my only son ! ’ said the old man, frantically, as he advanced to meet him. ‘ My only son, sir, and he is dying before his father’s eyes ! ’

“ At the first word the old man uttered, the stranger checked himself in his career, and, folding his arms, stood perfectly motionless.

“ ‘ Great God ! ’ exclaimed the old man, recoiling — ‘ Heyling ! ’

“ The stranger smiled, and was silent.

“ ‘ Heyling ! ’ said the old man, wildly — ‘ My boy, Heyling, my dear boy, look, look ! ’ gasping for breath, the miserable father pointed to the spot where the young man was struggling for life.

“ ‘ Hark ! ’ said the old man — ‘ He cries once more. He is alive yet. Heyling, save him, save him ! ’

“ The stranger smiled again, and remained immovable as a statue.

“ ‘ I have wronged you, ’ shrieked the old man, falling on his knees, and clasping his hands together. ‘ Be re-

venge'd ; take my all, my life ; cast me into the water at your feet, and, if human nature can repress a struggle, I will die, without stirring hand or foot. Do it, Heyling, do it, but save my boy, he is so young, Heyling, so young to die !'

“ ‘Listen,’ said the stranger, grasping the old man fiercely by the wrist — ‘I will have life for life, and here is ONE. *My* child died, before his father’s eyes, a far more agonizing and painful death than that young slanderer of his sister’s worth is meeting while I speak. You laughed — laughed in your daughter’s face, where death had already set his hand — at our sufferings, then. What think you of them now ? See there, see there !’

“As the stranger spoke, he pointed to the sea. A faint cry died away upon its surface : the last powerful struggle of the dying man agitated the rippling waves for a few seconds : and the spot where he had gone down into his early grave, was undistinguishable from the surrounding water.

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“Three years had elapsed, when a gentleman alighted from a private carriage at the door of a London attorney, then well known as a man of no great nicety in his professional dealings : and requested a private interview on business of importance. Although evidently not past the prime of life, his face was pale, haggard, and dejected ; and it did not require the acute perception of the man of business, to discern at a glance, that disease or suffering had done more to work a change in his appearance, than the mere hand of time could have accomplished in twice the period of his whole life.

“ ‘I wish you to undertake some legal business for me,’ said the stranger.

“The attorney bowed obsequiously, and glanced at a large packet which the gentleman carried in his hand. His visitor observed the look, and proceeded.

“‘It is no common business,’ said he ; ‘nor have these papers reached my hands without long trouble and great expense.’

“The attorney cast a still more anxious look at the packet: and his visitor, untying the string that bound it, disclosed a quantity of promissory notes, with copies of deeds, and other documents.

“‘Upon these papers,’ said the client, ‘the man whose name they bear, has raised, as you will see, large sums of money, for some years past. There was a tacit understanding between him and the men into whose hands they originally went — and from whom I have by degrees purchased the whole, for treble and quadruple their nominal value — that these loans should be from time to time renewed until a given period had elapsed. Such an understanding is nowhere expressed. He has sustained many losses of late ; and these obligations accumulating upon him at once, would crush him to the earth.’

“‘The whole amount is many thousands of pounds,’ said the attorney, looking over the papers.

“‘It is,’ said the client.

“‘What are we to do?’ inquired the man of business.

“‘Do!’ replied the client, with sudden vehemence — ‘Put every engine of the law in force, every trick that ingenuity can devise and rascality execute; fair means and foul; the open oppression of the law, aided by all the craft of its most ingenious practitioners. I would have him die a harassing and lingering death. Ruin him, seize and sell his lands and goods, drive him from house and home, and drag him forth a beggar in his old age, to die in a common jail.’



“‘But the costs, my dear sir, the costs of all this,’ reasoned the attorney, when he had recovered from his momentary surprise. ‘If the defendant be a man of straw, who is to pay the costs, sir?’

“‘Name any sum,’ said the stranger, his hand trembling so violently with excitement, that he could scarcely hold the pen he seized as he spoke — ‘Any sum, and it is yours. Don’t be afraid to name it, man. I shall not think it dear, if you gain my object.’

“The attorney named a large sum, at hazard, as the advance he should require to secure himself against the possibility of loss; but more with the view of ascertaining how far his client was really disposed to go, than with any idea that he would comply with the demand. The stranger wrote a check upon his banker, for the whole amount, and left him.

“The draft was duly honored, and the attorney, finding that his strange client might be safely relied upon, commenced his work in earnest. For more than two years afterwards, Mr. Heyling would sit whole days together, in the office, poring over the papers as they accumulated, and reading again and again, his eyes gleaming with joy, the letters of remonstrance, the prayers for a little delay, the representations of the certain ruin in which the opposite party must be involved, which poured in, as suit after suit, and process after process, was commenced. To all applications for a brief indulgence, there was but one reply — the money must be paid. Land, house, furniture, each in its turn, was taken under some one of the numerous executions which were issued; and the old man himself would have been immured in prison had he not escaped the vigilance of the officers, and fled.

“The implacable animosity of Heyling, so far from

being satiated by the success of his persecution, increased a hundred-fold with the ruin he inflicted. On being informed of the old man's flight, his fury was unbounded. He gnashed his teeth with rage, tore the hair from his head, and assailed with horrid imprecations the men who had been intrusted with the writ. He was only restored to comparative calmness by repeated assurances of the certainty of discovering the fugitive. Agents were sent in quest of him in all directions; every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to, for the purpose of discovering his place of retreat; but it was all in vain. Half a year had passed over, and he was still undiscovered.

“At length, late one night, Heyling, of whom nothing had been seen for many weeks before, appeared at his attorney's private residence, and sent up word that a gentleman wished to see him instantly. Before the attorney, who had recognized his voice from above stairs, could order the servant to admit him, he had rushed up the staircase, and entered the drawing-room pale and breathless. Having closed the door, to prevent being overheard, he sunk into a chair, and said, in a low voice:

“‘Hush! I have found him at last.’

“‘No!’ said the attorney. ‘Well done, my dear sir; well done.’

“‘He lies concealed in a wretched lodging in Camden Town,’ said Heyling. ‘Perhaps it is as well, we *did* lose sight of him, for he has been living alone there, in the most abject misery, all the time, and he is poor—very poor.’

“‘Very good,’ said the attorney. ‘You will have the caption made to-morrow, of course?’

“‘Yes,’ replied Heyling. ‘Stay! No! The next day.

You are surprised at my wishing to postpone it,' he added, with a ghastly smile; 'but I had forgotten. The next day is an anniversary in his life: let it be done then.'

" 'Very good,' said the attorney. 'Will you write down instructions for the officer?'

" 'No; let him meet me here, at eight in the evening, and I will accompany him myself.'

" They met on the appointed night, and, hiring a hackney-coach, directed the driver to stop at that corner of the old Pancras-road at which stands the parish workhouse. By the time they alighted there, it was quite dark; and, proceeding by the dead wall in front of the Veterinary Hospital, they entered a small by-street, which is, or was at that time, called Little College Street, and which, whatever it may be now, was in those days a desolate place enough, surrounded by little else than fields and ditches.

" Having drawn the travelling cap he had on, half over his face, and muffled himself in his cloak, Heyling stopped before the meanest-looking house in the street, and knocked gently at the door. It was at once opened by a woman, who dropped a courtesy of recognition, and Heyling whispering the officer to remain below, crept gently up-stairs, and opening the door of the front room, entered at once.

" The object of his search and his unrelenting animosity, now a decrepit old man, was seated at a bare deal table, on which stood a miserable candle. He started, on the entrance of the stranger, and rose feebly to his feet.

" 'What now, what now?' said the old man. 'What fresh misery is this? What do you want here?'

“‘A word with *you*,’ replied Heyling. As he spoke, he seated himself at the other end of the table, and, throwing off his cloak and cap, disclosed his features.

“The old man seemed instantly deprived of the power of speech. He fell backward in his chair, and, clasping his hands together, gazed on the apparition with a mingled look of abhorrence and fear.

“‘This day six years,’ said Heyling, ‘I claimed the life you owed me for my child’s. Beside the lifeless form of your daughter, old man, I swore to live a life of revenge. I have never swerved from my purpose for a moment’s space; but if I had, one thought of her uncomplaining suffering look, as she drooped away, or of the starving face of our innocent child, would have nerved me to my task. My first act of requital you well remember: this is my last.’

“The old man shivered, and his hands dropped powerless by his side.

“‘I leave England to-morrow,’ said Heyling, after a moment’s pause. ‘To-night I consign you to the living death to which you devoted her — a hopeless prison’ —

“He raised his eyes to the old man’s countenance, and paused. He lifted the light to his face, set it gently down, and left the apartment.

“‘You had better see to the old ‘man,’ he said to the woman, as he opened the door, and motioned the officer to follow him into the street — ‘I think he is ill.’ The woman closed the door, ran hastily up-stairs, and found him lifeless.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Beneath a plain gravestone, in one of the most peaceful and secluded church-yards in Kent, where wild-

flowers mingle with the grass, and the soft landscape around, forms the fairest spot in the garden of England, lie the bones of the young mother and her gentle child. But the ashes of the father do not mingle with theirs; nor from that night forward, did the attorney ever gain the remotest clue to the subsequent history of his queer client."

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As the old man concluded his tale, he advanced to a peg in one corner, and taking down his hat and coat, put them on with great deliberation; and, without saying another word, walked slowly away. As the gentleman with the Mosaic studs had fallen asleep, and the major part of the company were deeply occupied in the humorous process of dropping melted tallow-grease into his brandy and water, Mr. Pickwick departed unnoticed, and having settled his own score and that of Mr. Weller, issued forth, in company with that gentleman, from beneath the portal of the Magpie and Stump.

## CHAPTER XXII.

MR. PICKWICK JOURNEYS TO IPSWICH, AND MEETS WITH A ROMANTIC ADVENTURE WITH A MIDDLE-AGED LADY IN YELLOW CURL-PAPERS.

“THAT ’ere your governor’s luggage, Sammy?” inquired Mr. Weller senior, of his affectionate son, as he entered the yard of the Bull Inn, Whitechapel, with a travelling bag and a small portmanteau.

“You might ha’ made a worser guess than that, old feller,” replied Mr. Weller the younger, setting down his burden in the yard, and sitting himself down upon it afterwards. “The governor hisself’ll be down here presently.”

“He’s a-cabbin’ it, I suppose?” said the father.

“Yes, he’s a-havin’ two mile o’ danger at eight-pence,” responded the son. “How’s mother-in-law this mornin’?”

“Queer, Sammy, queer,” replied the elder Mr. Weller, with impressive gravity. “She’s been gettin’ rayther in the Methodistical order lately, Sammy; and she is uncommon pious, to be sure. She’s too good a creetur for me, Sammy — I feel I don’t deserve her.”

“Ah,” said Mr. Samuel, “that’s wery self-denyin’ o’ you.”

“Wery,” replied his parent, with a sigh. “She’s got hold o’ some invention for grown-up people being born

again, Sammy — the new birth, I thinks they calls it. I should wery much like to see that system in haction, Sammy. I should wery much like to see your mother-in-law born ag'in. Wouldn't I put her out to nurse !”

“What do you think them women does t'other day,” continued Mr. Weller, after a short pause, during which he had significantly struck the side of his nose with his forefinger some half-dozen times. “What do you think they does, t'other day, Sammy ?”

“Don't know,” replied Sam, “what ?”

“Goes and gets up a grand tea drinkin' for a feller they calls their shepherd,” said Mr. Weller. “I was a standing starin' in at the pictur' shop down at our place, when I sees a little bill about it: ‘Tickets half-a-crown. All applications to be made to the committee. Secretary, Mrs. Weller.’ And when I got home, there was the committee a-sittin' in our back parlor — fourteen women ; I wish you could ha' heard 'em, Sammy. There they was, a-passin' resolutions, and wotin' supplies, and all sorts o' games. Well, what with your mother-in-law a worrying me to go, and what with my looking for'ard to seein' some queer starts if I did, I put my name down for a ticket ; at six o'clock on the Friday evenin' I dresses myself out, wery smart, and off I goes vith the old 'oo-man, and up we walks into a fust floor where there was tea things for thirty, and a whole lot o' women as begins whispering to one another, and lookin' at me, as if they'd never seen a rayther stout gen'l'm'n of eight-and-fifty afore. By and by, there comes a great bustle down-stairs, and a lanky chap with a red nose and white neck-cloth rushes up, and sings out, ‘Here's the shepherd a coming to wisit his faithful flock ;’ and in comes a fat chap in black, vith a great white face, a smilin' away like

clock-work. Such goin's on, Sammy! 'The kiss of peace,' says the shepherd; and then he kissed the women all round, and ven he'd done, the man vith the red nose began. I was just a-thinkin' whether I hadn't better begin too — 'specially as there was a very nice lady a-sittin' next me — ven in comes the tea, and your mother-in-law, as had been makin' the kettle bile, down-stairs. At it they went, tooth and nail. Such a precious loud hymn, Sammy, while the tea was a-brewing; such a grace, such eatin' and drinkin'! I wish you would ha' seen the shepherd walking into the ham and muffins. I never see such a chap to eat and drink — never. The red-nosed man warn't by no means the sort of person you'd like to grub by contract, but he was nothin' to the shepherd. Well; arter the tea was over, they sung another hymn, and then the shepherd began to preach: and very well he did it, considerin' how heavy them muffins must have lied on his chest. Presently he pulls up, all of a sudden, and hollers out, 'Where is the sinner; where is the mis'erable sinner?' upon which, all the women looked at me, and began to groan as if they was dying. I thought it was rather sing'ler, but hows'ever, I says nothing. Presently he pulls up again, and looking very hard at me, says, 'Where is the sinner; where is the mis'erable sinner?' and all the women groans again, ten times louder than afore. I got rather wild at this, so I takes a step or two for'ard and says, 'My friend,' says I, 'did you apply that 'ere obserwation to me?' — 'Stead of begging my pardon as any gen'l'm'n would ha' done, he got more abusive than ever: called me a wessel, Sammy — a wessel of wrath — and all sorts o' names. So my blood being reg'larly up, I first gave him two or three for himself, and then two or three more to hand over to the



man with the red nose, and walked off. I wish you could ha' heard how the woman screamed, Sammy, ven they picked up the shepherd from under the table. — Hallo! here's the governor, the size of life!"

As Mr. Weller spoke, Mr. Pickwick dismounted from a cab, and entered the yard.

"Fine mornin' sir," said Mr. Weller senior.

"Beautiful indeed," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Beautiful indeed," echoed a red-haired man with an inquisitive nose and blue spectacles, who had unpacked himself from a cab at the same moment as Mr. Pickwick. "Going to Ipswich, sir?"

"I am," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"Extraordinary coincidence. So am I."

Mr. Pickwick bowed.

"Going outside?" said the red-haired man.

Mr. Pickwick bowed again.

"Bless my soul, how remarkable — I am going outside, too," said the red-haired man: "we are positively going together." And the red-haired man, who was an important-looking, sharp-nosed, mysterious-spoken personage, with a bird-like habit of giving his head a jerk every time he said anything, smiled as if he had made one of the strangest discoveries that ever fell to the lot of human wisdom.

"I am happy in the prospect of your company, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Ah," said the new comer, "it's a good thing for both of us, isn't it? Company, you see — company is — is — it's a very different thing from solitude — a'n't it?"

"There's no denyin' that 'ere," said Mr. Weller, joining in the conversation, with an affable smile. "That's what I call a self-evident proposition, as the dog's-meat

man said, when the house-maid told him he warn't a gentleman."

"Ah," said the red-haired man, surveying Mr. Weller from head to foot with a supercilious look. "Friend of yours, sir?"

"Not exactly a friend," replied Mr. Pickwick in a low tone. "The fact is, he is my servant, but I allow him to take a good many liberties; for, between ourselves, I flatter myself he is an original, and I am rather proud of him."

"Ah," said the red-haired man, "that, you see, is a matter of taste. I am not fond of anything original; I don't like it; don't see the necessity for it. What's your name, sir?"

"Here is my card, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick, much amused by the abruptness of the question, and the singular manner of the stranger.

"Ah," said the red-haired man, placing the card in his pocket-book, "Pickwick; very good. I like to know a man's name, it saves so much trouble. That's my card, sir. Magnus, you will perceive, sir—Magnus is my name. It's rather a good name, I think, sir?"

"A very good name, indeed," said Mr. Pickwick, wholly unable to repress a smile.

"Yes, I think it is," resumed Mr. Magnus. "There's a good name before it, too, you will observe. Permit me, sir—if you hold the card a little slanting, this way, you catch the light upon the up-stroke. There—Peter Magnus—sounds well, I think, sir."

"Very," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Curious circumstance about those initials, sir," said Mr. Magnus. "You will observe—P. M.—post meridian. In hasty notes to intimate acquaintance, I some-

times sign myself 'Afternoon.' It amuses my friends very much, Mr. Pickwick."

"It is calculated to afford them the highest gratification, I should conceive," said Mr. Pickwick, rather envying the ease with which Mr. Magnus's friends were entertained.

"Now, gen'l'm'n," said the hostler, "coach is ready, if you please."

"Is all my luggage in?" inquired Mr. Magnus.

"All right, sir."

"Is the red bag in?"

"All right, sir."

"And the striped bag?"

"Fore boot, sir."

"And the brown-paper parcel?"

"Under the seat, sir."

"And the leather hat-box?"

"They're all in, sir."

"Now, will you get up?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Excuse me," replied Magnus, standing on the wheel. "Excuse me, Mr. Pickwick. I cannot consent to get up, in this state of uncertainty. I am quite satisfied from that man's manner, that that leather hat-box is *not* in."

The solemn protestations of the hostler being wholly unavailing, the leather hat-box was obliged to be raked up from the lowest depth of the boot, to satisfy him that it had been safely packed; and after he had been assured on this head, he felt a solemn presentiment, first, that the red bag was mislaid, and next that the striped bag had been stolen, and then that the brown-paper parcel had "come untied." At length when he had received ocular demonstration of the groundless nature

of each and every of these suspicions, he consented to climb up to the roof of the coach, observing that now he had taken everything off his mind, he felt quite comfortable and happy.

"You're given to nervousness, a'n't you, sir?" inquired Mr. Weller senior, eyeing the stranger askance, as he mounted to his place.

"Yes; I always am rather, about these little matters," said the stranger, "but I am all right now — quite right."

"Well, that's a blessin'," said Mr. Weller. "Sammy, help your master up to the box; t'other leg, sir, that's it; give us your hand, sir. Up with you. You was a lighter weight when you was a boy, sir."

"True enough, that, Mr. Weller," said the breathless Mr. Pickwick, good-humoredly, as he took his seat on the box beside him.

"Jump up in front, Sammy," said Mr. Weller. "Now Villam, run 'em out. Take care o' the archvay, gen'l'm'n. 'Heads,' as the pieman says. That'll do, Villam. Let 'em alone." And away went the coach up Whitechapel, to the admiration of the whole population of that pretty densely-populated quarter.

"Not a verry nice neighborhood this, sir," said Sam, with the touch of the hat which always preceded his entering into conversation with his master.

"It is not indeed, Sam," replied Mr. Pickwick, surveying the crowded and filthy street through which they were passing.

"It's a verry remarkable circumstance, sir," said Sam, "that poverty and oysters always seems to go together."

"I don't understand you, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"What I mean, sir," said Sam, "is, that the poorer a

place is, the greater call there seems to be for oysters. Look here, sir; here's a oyster stall to every half-dozen houses — the street's lined with 'em. Blessed if I don't think that ven a man's very poor, he rushes out of his lodgings, and eats oysters in reg'lar desperation."

"To be sure he does," said Mr. Weller senior, "and it's just the same with pickled salmon!"

"Those are two very remarkable facts, which never occurred to me before," said Mr. Pickwick. "The very first place we stop at, I'll make a note of them."

By this time they had reached the turnpike at Mile End; a profound silence prevailed, until they had got two or three miles farther on, when Mr. Weller senior, turning suddenly to Mr. Pickwick, said —

"Wery queer life is a pike-keeper's, sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"A pike-keeper."

"What do you mean by a pike-keeper?" inquired Mr. Peter Magnus.

"The old 'un means a turnpike keeper, gen'l'm'n," observed Mr. Weller, in explanation.

"Oh," said Mr. Pickwick, "I see. Yes; very curious life. Very uncomfortable."

"They're all on 'em men as has met with some disappointment in life," said Mr. Weller senior.

"Ay, ay?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Yes. Consequence of vich, they retires from the world, and shuts themselves up in pikes; partly with the view of being solitary, and partly to rewenge themselves on mankind, by takin' tolls."

"Dear me," said Mr. Pickwick, "I never knew that before."

"Fact, sir," said Mr. Weller, "if they was gen'l'm'n

you'd call 'em misanthropes, but as it is they only takes to pike-keepin'."

With such conversation, possessing the inestimable charm of blending amusement with instruction, did Mr. Weller beguile the tediousness of the journey, during the greater part of the day. Topics of conversation were never wanting, for even when any pause occurred in Mr. Weller's loquacity, it was abundantly supplied by the desire evinced by Mr. Magnus to make himself acquainted with the whole of the personal history of his fellow-travellers, and his loudly-expressed anxiety at every stage, respecting the safety and well-being of the two bags, the leather hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel.

In the main street of Ipswich, on the left-hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide by the appellation of "The Great White Horse," rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse, which is elevated above the principal door. The Great White Horse is famous in the neighborhood, in the same degree as a prize ox, or county paper-chronicled turnip, or unwieldy pig — for its enormous size. Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, badly-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating or sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected together between the four walls of the Great White Horse at Ipswich.

It was at the door of this overgrown tavern, that the London coach stopped, at the same hour every evening; and it was from this same London coach, that Mr. Pick-

wick, Sam Weller, and Mr. Peter Magnus dismounted, on the particular evening to which this chapter of our history bears reference.

“Do you stop here, sir?” inquired Mr. Peter Magnus, when the striped bag, and the red bag, and the brown-paper parcel, and the leather hat-box, had all been deposited in the passage. “Do you stop here, sir?”

“I do,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Dear me,” said Mr. Magnus, “I never knew anything like these extraordinary coincidences. Why, I stop here, too. I hope we dine together?”

“With pleasure,” replied Mr. Pickwick. “I am not quite certain whether I have any friends here or not, though. Is there any gentleman of the name of Tupman here, waiter?”

A corpulent man, with a fortnight’s napkin under his arm, and coeval stockings on his legs, slowly desisted from his occupation of staring down the street, on this question being put to him by Mr. Pickwick; and, after minutely inspecting that gentleman’s appearance, from the crown of his hat to the lowest button of his gaiters, replied emphatically:

“No.”

“Nor any gentleman of the name of Snodgrass?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“No!”

“Nor Winkle?”

“No.”

“My friends have not arrived to-day, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick. “We will dine alone, then. Show us a private room, waiter.”

On this request being preferred, the corpulent man

condescended to order the boots to bring in the gentlemen's luggage; and preceding them down a long dark passage, ushered them into a large badly-furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place. After the lapse of an hour, a bit of fish and a steak were served up to the travellers, and when the dinner was cleared away, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Peter Magnus drew their chairs up to the fire, and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine, at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.

Mr. Peter Magnus was naturally of a very communicative disposition, and the brandy and water operated with wonderful effect in warming into life the deepest hidden secrets of his bosom. After sundry accounts of himself, his family, his connections, his friends, his jokes, his business, and his brothers (most talkative men have a great deal to say about their brothers), Mr. Peter Magnus took a blue view of Mr. Pickwick through his colored spectacles for several minutes, and then said, with an air of modesty:

"And what do you think — what *do* you think, Mr. Pickwick — I have come down here for?"

"Upon my word," said Mr. Pickwick, "it is wholly impossible for me to guess; on business, perhaps."

"Partly right, sir," replied Mr. Peter Magnus, "but partly wrong, at the same time: try again, Mr. Pickwick."

"Really," said Mr. Pickwick, "I must throw myself on your mercy, to tell me or not, as you may think best; for I should never guess, if I were to try all night."



“Why, then, he — he — he!” said Mr. Peter Magnus, with a bashful titter, “What should you think, Mr. Pickwick, if I had come down here, to make a proposal, sir, eh? He — he — he!”

“Think! that you are very likely to succeed,” replied Mr. Pickwick, with one of his most beaming smiles.

“Ah!” said Mr. Magnus, “but do you really think so, Mr. Pickwick? Do you, though?”

“Certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“No; but you’re joking, though.”

“I am not, indeed.”

“Why, then,” said Mr. Magnus, “to let you into a little secret, *I* think so too. I don’t mind telling you, Mr. Pickwick, although I’m dreadful jealous by nature — horrid — that the lady is in this house.” Here Mr. Magnus took off his spectacles, on purpose to wink, and then put them on again.

“That’s what you were running out of the room for, before dinner, then, so often,” said Mr. Pickwick, archly.

“Hush — yes, you’re right, that was it; not such a fool as to see her, though.”

“No!”

“No; wouldn’t do, you know, after having just come off a journey. Wait till to-morrow, sir; double the chance then. Mr. Pickwick, sir, there is a suit of clothes in that bag, and a hat in that box, which I expect, in the effect they will produce, will be invaluable to me, sir.”

“Indeed!” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Yes; you must have observed my anxiety about them to-day. I do not believe that such another suit of clothes, and such a hat, could be bought for money, Mr. Pickwick.”

Mr. Pickwick congratulated the fortunate owner of the

irresistible garments, on their acquisition; and Mr. Peter Magnus remained for a few moments apparently absorbed in contemplation.

“She’s a fine creature,” said Mr. Magnus.

“Is she?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Very,” said Mr. Magnus, “very. She lives about twenty miles from here, Mr. Pickwick. I heard she would be here to-night and all to-morrow forenoon, and came down to seize the opportunity. I think an inn is a good sort of a place to propose to a single woman in, Mr. Pickwick. She is more likely to feel the loneliness of her situation in travelling, perhaps, than she would be at home. What do you think, Mr. Pickwick?”

“I think it very probable,” replied that gentleman.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick,” said Mr. Peter Magnus, “but I am naturally rather curious; what may *you* have come down here for?”

“On a far less pleasant errand, sir,” replied Mr. Pickwick, the color mounting to his face at the recollection. “I have come down here, sir, to expose the treachery and falsehood of an individual, upon whose truth and honor I placed implicit reliance.”

“Dear me,” said Mr. Peter Magnus, “that’s very unpleasant. It is a lady, I presume? Eh? ah! Sly, Mr. Pickwick, sly. Well, Mr. Pickwick, sir, I wouldn’t probe your feelings for the world. Painful subjects, these, sir, very painful. Don’t mind me, Mr. Pickwick, if you wish to give vent to your feelings. I know what it is to be jilted, sir; I have endured that sort of thing three or four times.”

“I am much obliged to you, for your condolence on what you presume to be my melancholy case,” said Mr. Pickwick, winding up his watch, and laying it on the table, “but”—

“No, no,” said Mr. Peter Magnus, “not a word more: it’s a painful subject. I see, I see. What’s the time, Mr. Pickwick?”

“Past twelve.”

“Dear me, it’s time to go to bed. It will never do, sitting here. I shall be pale to-morrow, Mr. Pickwick.”

At the bare notion of such a calamity, Mr. Peter Magnus rung the bell for the chamber-maid; and the striped bag, the red bag, the leathern hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel, having been conveyed to his bedroom, he retired in company with a japanned candlestick, to one side of the house, while Mr. Pickwick, and another japanned candlestick, were conducted through a multitude of tortuous windings, to another.

“This is your room, sir,” said the chamber-maid.

“Very well,” replied Mr. Pickwick, looking round him. It was a tolerably large double-bedded room, with a fire; upon the whole, a more comfortable-looking apartment than Mr. Pickwick’s short experience of the accommodations of the Great White Horse had led him to expect.

“Nobody sleeps in the other bed, of course,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Oh no, sir.”

“Very good. Tell my servant to bring me up some hot water at half-past eight in the morning, and that I shall not want him any more to-night.”

“Yes, sir.” And bidding Mr. Pickwick good-night, the chamber-maid retired, and left him alone.

Mr. Pickwick sat himself down in a chair before the fire, and fell into a train of rambling meditations. First he thought of his friends, and wondered when they would join him; then his mind reverted to Mrs. Martha Bar-

dell ; and from that lady it wandered, by a natural process, to the dingy counting-house of Dodson and Fogg. From Dodson and Fogg's it flew off at a tangent, to the very centre of the history of the queer client ; and then it came back to the Great White Horse at Ipswich, with sufficient clearness to convince Mr. Pickwick that he was falling asleep : so he roused himself, and began to undress, when he recollected he had left his watch on the table down-stairs.

Now, this watch was a special favorite with Mr. Pickwick, having been carried about, beneath the shadow of his waistcoat, for a greater number of years than we feel called upon to state, at present. The possibility of going to sleep, unless it were ticking gently beneath his pillow, or in the watch-pocket over his head, had never entered Mr. Pickwick's brain. So as it was pretty late now, and he was unwilling to ring his bell at that hour of the night, he slipped on his coat, of which he had just divested himself, and taking the japanned candlestick in his hand, walked quietly down-stairs.

The more stairs Mr. Pickwick went down, the more stairs there seemed to be to descend, and again and again, when Mr. Pickwick got into some narrow passage, and began to congratulate himself on having gained the ground-floor, did another flight of stairs appear before his astonished eyes. At last he reached a stone hall, which he remembered to have seen when he entered the house. Passage after passage did he explore ; room after room did he peep into ; at length, just as he was on the point of giving up the search in despair, he opened the door of the identical room in which he had spent the evening, and beheld his missing property on the table.

Mr. Pickwick seized the watch in triumph, and proceeded to retrace his steps to his bedchamber. If his progress downwards had been attended with difficulties and uncertainty, his journey back, was infinitely more perplexing. Rows of doors, garnished with boots of every shape, make, and size, branched off in every possible direction. A dozen times did he softly turn the handle of some bedroom door, which resembled his own, when a gruff cry from within of "Who the devil's that?" or "What do you want here?" caused him to steal away, on tiptoe, with a perfectly marvellous celerity. He was reduced to the verge of despair, when an open door attracted his attention. He peeped in — right at last. There were the two beds, whose situation he perfectly remembered, and the fire still burning. His candle, not a long one when he first received it, had flickered away in the drafts of air through which he had passed, and sunk into the socket, just as he closed the door after him. "No matter," said Mr. Pickwick, "I can undress myself just as well, by the light of the fire."

The bedsteads stood, one on each side of the door; and on the inner side of each, was a little path, terminating in a rush-bottomed chair, just wide enough to admit of a person's getting into, or out of bed, on that side, if he or she thought proper. Having carefully drawn the curtains of his bed on the outside, Mr. Pickwick sat down on the rush-bottomed chair, and leisurely divested himself of his shoes and gaiters. He then took off and folded up, his coat, waistcoat, and neck-cloth, and slowly drawing on his tasselled nightcap, secured it firmly on his head, by tying beneath his chin, the strings which he always had attached to that article of dress. It was at

this moment that the absurdity of his recent bewilderment struck upon his mind ; and throwing himself back in the rush-bottomed chair, Mr. Pickwick laughed to himself so heartily, that it would have been quite delightful to any man of well-constituted mind to have watched the smiles which expanded his amiable features as they shone forth, from beneath the nightcap.

“It is the best idea,” said Mr. Pickwick to himself, smiling till he almost cracked the nightcap strings — “It is the best idea, my losing myself in this place, and wandering about those staircases, that I ever heard of. Droll, droll, very droll.” Here Mr. Pickwick smiled again, a broader smile than before, and was about to continue the process of undressing, in the best possible humor, when he was suddenly stopped by a most unexpected interruption ; to wit, the entrance into the room of some person with a candle, who, after locking the door, advanced to the dressing-table, and set down the light upon it.

The smile that played on Mr. Pickwick’s features, was instantaneously lost in a look of the most unbounded and wonder-stricken surprise. The person, whoever it was, had come in so suddenly and with so little noise, that Mr. Pickwick had had no time to call out, or oppose their entrance. Who could it be ? A robber ? Some evil-minded person who had seen him come up-stairs with a handsome watch in his hand, perhaps. What was he to do !

The only way in which Mr. Pickwick could catch a glimpse of his mysterious visitor with the least danger of being seen himself, was by creeping on to the bed, and peeping out from between the curtains on the opposite side. To this manœuvre he accordingly resorted. Keep-

ing the curtains carefully closed with his hand, so that nothing more of him could be seen than his face and night cap, and putting on his spectacles, he mustered up courage, and looked out.

Mr. Pickwick almost fainted with horror and dismay. Standing before the dressing-glass, was a middle-aged lady in yellow curl-papers, busily engaged in brushing what ladies call their "back hair." However the unconscious middle-aged lady came into that room, it was quite clear that she contemplated remaining there for the night; for she had brought a rushlight and shade with her, which, with praiseworthy precaution against fire, she had stationed in a basin on the floor, where it was glimmering away, like a gigantic lighthouse, in a particularly small piece of water.

"Bless my soul," thought Mr. Pickwick, "what a dreadful thing!"

"Hem!" said the lady; and in went Mr. Pickwick's head with automaton-like rapidity.

"I never met with anything so awful as this," thought poor Mr. Pickwick, the cold perspiration starting in drops upon his nightcap. "Never. This is fearful."

It was quite impossible to resist the urgent desire to see what was going forward. So, out went Mr. Pickwick's head again. The prospect was worse than before. The middle-aged lady had finished arranging her hair: had carefully enveloped it, in a muslin nightcap, with a small plaited border; and was gazing pensively on the fire.

"This matter is growing alarming," reasoned Mr. Pickwick with himself. "I can't allow things to go on in this way. By the self-possession of that lady, it is clear to me that I must have come into the wrong room.

If I call out, she'll alarm the house; but if I remain here, the consequences will be still more frightful."

Mr. Pickwick, it is quite unnecessary to say, was one of the most modest and delicate-minded of mortals. The very idea of exhibiting his nightcap to a lady, overpowered him, but he had tied those confounded strings in a knot, and, do what he would, he couldn't get it off. The disclosure must be made. There was only one other way of doing it. He shrunk behind the curtains, and called out very loudly —

"Ha — hum!"

That the lady started at this unexpected sound was evident, by her falling up against the rush-light shade; that she persuaded herself it must have been the effect of imagination was equally clear, for when Mr. Pickwick, under the impression that she had fainted away, stone-dead from fright, ventured to peep out again, she was gazing pensively on the fire as before.

"Most extraordinary female this," thought Mr. Pickwick, popping in again. "Ha — hum!"

These last sounds, so like those in which, as legends inform us, the ferocious giant Blunderbore was in the habit of expressing his opinion that it was time to lay the cloth, were too distinctly audible, to be again mistaken for the workings of fancy.

"Gracious Heaven!" said the middle-aged lady, "what's that?"

"It's — it's — only a gentleman, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick from behind the curtains.

"A gentleman!" said the lady, with a terrific scream.

"It's all over," thought Mr. Pickwick.

"A strange man!" shrieked the lady. Another instant, and the house would be alarmed. Her garments rustled as she rushed towards the door.



“Ma’am,” said Mr. Pickwick, thrusting out his head, in the extremity of his desperation, “Ma’am.”

Now although Mr. Pickwick was not actuated by any definite object in putting out his head, it was instantaneously productive of a good effect. The lady, as we have already stated, was near the door. She must pass it, to reach the staircase, and she would most undoubtedly have done so, by this time, had not the sudden apparition of Mr. Pickwick’s nightcap driven her back, into the remotest corner of the apartment, where she stood, staring wildly at Mr. Pickwick, while Mr. Pickwick in his turn, stared wildly at her.

“Wretch,” said the lady, covering her eyes with her hands, “what do you want here?”

“Nothing, Ma’am — nothing whatever, Ma’am ;” said Mr. Pickwick, earnestly.

“Nothing !” said the lady, looking up.

“Nothing, Ma’am, upon my honor,” said Mr. Pickwick, nodding his head so energetically, that the tassel of his nightcap danced again. “I am almost ready to sink, Ma’am, beneath the confusion of addressing a lady in my nightcap (here the lady hastily snatched off hers), but I can’t get it off, Ma’am (here Mr. Pickwick gave it a tremendous tug, in proof of the statement). It is evident to me, Ma’am, now, that I have mistaken this bedroom for my own. I had not been here five minutes, Ma’am, when you suddenly entered it.”

“If this improbable story be really true, sir,” said the lady, sobbing violently, “you will leave it instantly.”

“I will Ma’am with the greatest pleasure,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Instantly, sir,” said the lady.

“Certainly, Ma’am,” interposed Mr. Pickwick very

quickly. "Certainly, Ma'am. I—I—am very sorry, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, making his appearance at the bottom of the bed, "to have been the innocent occasion of this alarm and emotion; deeply sorry, Ma'am."

The lady pointed to the door. One excellent quality of Mr. Pickwick's character was beautifully displayed at this moment, under the most trying circumstances. Although he had hastily put on his hat over his night-cap, after the manner of the old patrol; although he carried his shoes and gaiters in his hand, and his coat and waistcoat over his arm, nothing could subdue his native politeness.

"I am exceedingly sorry, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, bowing very low.

"If you are, sir, you will at once leave the room," said the lady,

"Immediately, Ma'am; this instant, Ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, opening the door, and dropping both his shoes with a loud crash in so doing.

"I trust, Ma'am," resumed Mr. Pickwick, gathering up his shoes, and turning round to bow again. "I trust, Ma'am, that my unblemished character, and the devoted respect I entertain for your sex, will plead as some slight excuse for this"—But before Mr. Pickwick could conclude the sentence, the lady had thrust him into the passage, and locked and bolted the door behind him.

Whatever grounds of self-congratulation Mr. Pickwick might have, for having escaped so quietly from his late awkward situation, his present position was by no means enviable. He was alone, in an open passage, in a strange house, in the middle of the night, half dressed; it was not to be supposed that he could find his way in perfect darkness to a room which he had been wholly unable to

discover with a light, and if he made the slightest noise in his fruitless attempts to do so, he stood every chance of being shot at, and perhaps killed, by some wakeful traveller. He had no resource but to remain where he was, until daylight appeared. So after groping his way a few paces down the passage, and to his infinite alarm, stumbling over several pairs of boots in so doing, Mr. Pickwick crouched into a little recess in the wall, to wait for morning, as philosophically as he might.

He was not destined, however, to undergo this additional trial of patience : for he had not been long ensconced in his present concealment when, to his unspeakable horror, a man, bearing a light, appeared at the end of the passage. His horror was suddenly converted into joy, however, when he recognized the form of his faithful attendant. It was indeed Mr. Samuel Weller, who after sitting up thus late, in conversation with the Boots, who was sitting up for the mail, was now about to retire to rest.

“ Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, suddenly appearing before him, “ Where’s my bedroom ? ”

Mr. Weller stared at his master with the most emphatic surprise ; and it was not until the question had been repeated three several times, that he turned round, and led the way to the long-sought apartment.

“ Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, as he got into bed. “ I have made one of the most extraordinary mistakes to-night that ever were heard of.”

“ Wery likely, sir,” replied Mr. Weller, dryly.

“ But of this I am determined, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick ; “ that if I were to stop in this house for six months, I would never trust myself about it, alone, again.”

“ That’s the wery prudentest resolution as you could

come to, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "You rayther want somebody to look arter you sir, wen your judgment goes out a wisitin'."

"What do you mean by that Sam?" said Mr. Pickwick. He raised himself in bed, and extended his hand, as if he were about to say something more; but suddenly checking himself, turned round, and bade his valet "Good-night."

"Good-night, sir," replied Mr. Weller. He paused when he got outside the door—shook his head—walked on—stopped—snuffed the candle—shook his head again—and finally proceeded slowly to his chamber, apparently buried in the profoundest meditation.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH MR. SAMUEL WELLER BEGINS TO DEVOTE HIS ENERGIES TO THE RETURN MATCH BETWEEN HIMSELF AND MR. TROTTER.

IN a small room in the vicinity of the stable-yard, betimes in the morning, which was ushered in by Mr. Pickwick's adventure with the middle-aged lady in the yellow curl-papers, sat Mr. Weller senior, preparing himself for his journey to London. He was sitting in an excellent attitude for having his portrait taken.

It is very possible that at some earlier period of his career, Mr. Weller's profile might have presented a bold, and determined outline. His face, however, had expanded under the influence of good living, and a disposition remarkable for resignation; and its bold fleshy curves had so far extended beyond the limits originally assigned them, that unless you took a full view of his countenance in front, it was difficult to distinguish more than the extreme tip of a very rubicund nose. His chin, from the same cause, had acquired the grave and imposing form which is generally described by prefixing the word "double" to that expressive feature; and his complexion exhibited that peculiarly mottled combination of colors which is only to be seen in gentlemen of his profession, and in underdone roast beef. Round his neck he

wore a crimson travelling shawl, which merged into his chin by such imperceptible gradations, that it was difficult to distinguish the folds of the one, from the folds of the other. Over this, he mounted a long waistcoat of a broad pink-striped pattern, and over that again, a wide-skirted green coat, ornamented with large brass buttons, whereof the two which garnished the waist, were so far apart, that no man had ever beheld them both, at the same time. His hair, which was short, sleek, and black, was just visible beneath the capacious brim of a low-crowned brown hat. His legs were encased in knee-cord breeches, and painted top-boots: and a copper watch-chain, terminating in one seal, and a key of the same material, dangled loosely from his capacious waistband.

We have said that Mr. Weller was engaged in preparing for his journey to London — he was taking sustenance, in fact. On the table before him, stood a pot of ale, a cold round of beef, and a very respectable-looking loaf, to each of which he distributed his favors in turn, with the most rigid impartiality. He had just cut a mighty slice from the latter, when the footsteps of somebody entering the room, caused him to raise his head; and he beheld his son.

“Mornin’ Sammy!” said the father.

The son walked up to the pot of ale, and nodding significantly to his parent, took a long draught by way of reply.

“Wery good power o’ suction, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller the elder, looking into the pot, when his first-born had set it down half empty. “You’d ha’ made an uncommon fine oyster, Sammy, if you’d been born in that station o’ life.”

“Yes, I des-say I should ha’ managed to pick up a

respectable livin’,” replied Sam, applying himself to the cold beef, with considerable vigor.

“I’m wery sorry, Sammy,” said the elder Mr. Weller, shaking up the ale, by describing small circles with the pot, preparatory to drinking. “I’m wery sorry, Sammy, to hear from your lips, as you let yourself be gammoned by that ’ere mulberry man. I always thought, up to three days ago, that the names of Veller and gammon could never come into contract, Sammy — never.”

“Always exceptin’ the case of a widder, of course,” said Sam.

“Widders, Sammy,” replied Mr. Weller, slightly changing color. “Widders are ’ceptions to ev’ry rule. I *have* heerd how many ord’nary women, one widder’s equal to, in p’int o’ comin’ over you. I think it’s five-and-twenty, but I don’t rightly know vether it a’n’t more.”

“Well; that’s pretty well,” said Sam.

“Besides,” continued Mr. Weller, not noticing the interruption, “that’s a wery different thing. You know what the counsel said, Sammy, as defended the gen’lem’n as beat his wife with the poker, venever he got jolly. ‘And arter all, my Lord,’ says he, ‘it’s a am’able weakness.’ So I says respectin’ widders, Sammy, and so you’ll say, ven you gets as old as me.”

“I ought to ha’ know’d better, I know,” said Sam.

“Ought to ha’ know’d better!” repeated Mr. Weller, striking the table with his fist. “Ought to ha’ know’d better! why, I know a young ’un as hasn’t had half nor quarter your eddication — as hasn’t slept about the markets, no, not six months — who’d ha’ scorned to be let in, in such a vay; scorned it, Sammy.” In the excitement of feeling produced by this agonizing reflection, Mr.

Weller rung the bell, and ordered an additional pint of ale.

“Well, it’s no use talking about it now,” said Sam. “It’s over, and can’t be helped, and that’s one consolation, as they always says in Turkey, ven they cuts the wrong man’s head off. It’s my innings now, gov’rnor, and as soon as I catches hold o’ this ’ere Trotter, I’ll have a good ’un.”

“I hope you will, Sammy. I hope you will,” returned Mr. Weller. “Here’s your health, Sammy, and may you speedily vipe off the disgrace as you’ve inflicted on the family name.” In honor of this toast Mr. Weller imbibed a draught, at least two thirds of the newly-arrived pint, and handed it over to his son, to dispose of the remainder, which he instantaneously did.

“And now, Sammy,” said Mr. Weller, consulting the large double-cased silver watch that hung at the end of the copper chain. “Now it’s time I was up at the office to get my vay-bill, and see the coach loaded; for coaches, Sammy, is like guns — they requires to be loaded with wery great care, afore they go off.”

At this parental and professional joke, Mr. Weller junior smiled a filial smile. His revered parent continued in a solemn tone:

“I’m goin’ to leave you, Samivel, my boy, and there’s no telling ven I shall see you again. Your mother-in-law may ha’ been too much for me, or a thousand things may have happened by the time you next hears any news o’ the celebrated Mr. Veller o’ the Bell Savage. The family name depends wery much upon you, Samivel, and I hope you’ll do wot’s right by it. Upon all little pints o’ breedin’, I know I may trust you as vell as if it was my own self. So I’ve only this here one little bit of



advice to give you. If ever you gets to up'ards o' fifty, and feels disposed to go a-marryin' anybody — no matter who — just you shut yourself up in your own room, if you've got one, and p'ison yourself off-hand. Hangin's wulgar, so don't you have nothin' to say to that. P'ison yourself, Samivel, my boy, p'ison yourself, and you'll be glad on it arterwards." With these affecting words, Mr. Weller looked steadfastly on his son, and turning slowly upon his heel disappeared from his sight.

In the contemplative mood which these words had awakened, Mr. Samuel Weller walked forth from the Great White Horse when his father had left him; and bending his steps towards St. Clement's Church, endeavored to dissipate his melancholy by strolling among its ancient precincts. He had loitered about, for some time, when he found himself in a retired spot — a kind of court-yard of venerable appearance — which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered. He was about retracing his steps, when he was suddenly transfixed to the spot by a sudden appearance; and the mode and manner of this appearance, we now proceed to relate.

Mr. Samuel Weller had been staring up at the old red brick houses now and then, in his deep abstraction, bestowing a wink upon some healthy-looking servant girl as she drew up a blind, or threw open a bedroom window, when the green gate of a garden at the bottom of the yard opened, and a man having emerged therefrom, closed the green gate very carefully after him, and walked briskly towards the very spot where Mr. Weller was standing.

Now, taking this as an isolated fact, unaccompanied by any attendant circumstances, there was nothing very ex-

traordinary in it; because in many parts of the world men do come out of gardens, close green gates after them, and even walk briskly away, without attracting any particular share of public observation. It is clear, therefore, that there must have been something in the man, or in his manner, or both, to attract Mr. Weller's particular notice. Whether there was, or not, we must leave the reader to determine, when we have faithfully recounted the behavior of the individual in question.

When the man had shut the green gate after him, he walked, as we have said twice already, with a brisk pace up the court-yard; but he no sooner caught sight of Mr. Weller, than he faltered, and stopped, as if uncertain, for the moment, what course to adopt. As the green gate was closed behind him, and there was no other outlet but the one in front, however, he was not long in perceiving that he must pass Mr. Samuel Weller to get away. He therefore resumed his brisk pace, and advanced, staring straight before him. The most extraordinary thing about the man was, that he was contorting his face into the most fearful and astonishing grimaces that ever were beheld. Nature's handiwork never was disguised with such extraordinary artificial carving, as the man had overlaid his countenance with, in one moment.

"Well!" said Mr. Weller to himself, as the man approached. "This is very odd. I could ha' swore it was him."

Up came the man, and his face became more frightfully distorted than ever, as he drew nearer.

"I could take my oath to that 'ere black hair, and mulberry suit," said Mr. Weller; "only I never see such a face as that, afore."

As Mr. Weller said this, the man's features assumed

an unearthly twinge, perfectly hideous. He was obliged to pass very near Sam however, and the scrutinizing glance of that gentleman enabled him to detect, under all these appalling twists of feature, something too like the small eyes of Mr. Job Trotter, to be easily mistaken.

“Hallo, you sir!” shouted Sam, fiercely.

The stranger stopped.

“Hallo!” repeated Sam, still more gruffly.

The man with the horrible face, looked, with the greatest surprise, up the court, and down the court, and in at the windows of the houses—everywhere but at Sam Weller—and took another step forward, when he was brought to again, by another shout.

“Hallo, you sir!” said Sam, for the third time.

There was no pretending to mistake where the voice came from now, so the stranger having no other resource, at last looked Sam Weller full in the face.

“It won’t do, Job Trotter,” said Sam. “Come! None o’ that ’ere nonsense. You a’n’t so wery ’an’some that you can afford to throw away many o’ your good looks. Bring them ’ere eyes o’ yourn back into their proper places, or I’ll knock ’em out of your head. D’ye hear?”

As Mr. Weller appeared fully disposed to act up to the spirit of this address, Mr. Trotter gradually allowed his face to resume its natural expression; and then giving a start of joy, exclaimed, “What do I see! Mr. Walker!”

“Ah,” replied Sam. “You’re wery glad to see me, a’n’t you?”

“Glad!” exclaimed Job Trotter; “Oh, Mr. Walker, if you had but known how I have looked forward to this

meeting! It is too much, Mr. Walker; I cannot bear it, indeed I cannot." And with these words, Mr. Trotter burst into a regular inundation of tears, and, flinging his arms round those of Mr. Weller, embraced him closely, in an ecstacy of joy.

"Get off!" cried Sam, indignant at this process, and vainly endeavoring to extricate himself from the grasp of his enthusiastic acquaintance. "Get off, I tell you. What are you crying over me for, you portable ingine?"

"Because I am so glad to see you," replied Job Trotter, gradually releasing Mr. Weller, as the first symptoms of his pugnacity disappeared. "Oh, Mr. Walker, this is too much."

"Too much!" echoed Sam, "I think it is too much — rayther! Now what have you got to say to me, eh?"

Mr. Trotter made no reply; for the little pink pocket handkerchief was in full force.

"What have you got to say to me, afore I knock your head off?" repeated Mr. Weller, in a threatening manner.

"Eh!" said Mr. Trotter, with a look of virtuous surprise.

"What have you got to say to me?"

"I, Mr. Walker?"

"Don't call me Valker; my name's Veller; you know that vell enough. What have you got to say to me?"

"Bless you, Mr. Walker — Weller I mean — a great many things, if you will come away somewhere, where we can talk comfortably. If you knew how I have looked for you, Mr. Weller" —

"Wery hard, indeed, I s'pose?" said Sam, dryly.

"Very, very, sir," replied Mr. Trotter, without moving

a muscle of his face. "But shake hands, Mr. Weller."

Sam eyed his companion for a few seconds, and then, as if actuated by a sudden impulse, complied with his request.

"How," said Job Trotter, as they walked away, "How is your dear, good master? Oh, he is a worthy gentleman, Mr. Weller! I hope he didn't catch cold, that dreadful night, sir."

There was a momentary look of deep slyness in Job Trotter's eye, as he said this, which ran a thrill through Mr. Weller's clenched fist as he burnt with a desire to make a demonstration on his ribs. Sam constrained himself, however, and replied that his master was extremely well.

"Oh, I am so glad," replied Mr. Trotter, "is he here?"

"Is yourn?" asked Sam, by way of reply.

"Oh, yes, he is here, and I grieve to say, Mr. Weller, he is going on, worse than ever."

"Ah, ah?" said Sam.

"Oh, shocking — terrible!"

"At a boarding-school?" said Sam.

"No, not at a boarding-school," replied Job Trotter, with the same sly look which Sam had noticed before;

"Not at a boarding-school."

"At the house with the green gate?" inquired Sam, eying his companion closely.

"No, no — oh, not there," replied Job, with a quickness very unusual to him, "not there."

"What was *you* a doin' there?" asked Sam, with a sharp glance. "Got inside the gate by accident, perhaps?"

“Why, Mr. Weller,” replied Job, “I don’t mind telling you my little secrets, because, you know, we took such a fancy for each other when we first met. You recollect how pleasant we were that morning?”

“Oh yes,” said Sam, impatiently. “I remember Well.”

“Well,” replied Job, speaking with great precision, and in the low tone of a man who communicates an important secret; “In that house with the green gate, Mr Weller, they keep a good many servants.”

“So I should think, from the look on it,” interposed Sam.

“Yes,” continued Mr. Trotter, “and one of them is a cook, who has saved up a little money, Mr. Weller, and is desirous if she can establish herself in life, to open a little shop in the chandlery way, you see.”

“Yes?”

“Yes, Mr. Weller. Well, sir, I met her at a chapel that I go to — a very neat little chapel in this town, Mr. Weller, where they sing the number four collection of hymns, which I generally carry about with me, in a little book, which you may perhaps have seen in my hand — and I got a little intimate with her, Mr. Weller, and from that, an acquaintance sprung up between us, and I may venture to say, Mr. Weller, that I am to be the chandler.”

“Ah, and a very amiable chandler you’ll make,” replied Sam, eying Job with a side look of intense dislike.

“The great advantage of this, Mr. Weller,” continued Job, his eyes filling with tears as he spoke, “will be, that I shall be able to leave my present disgraceful service with that bad man, and to devote myself to a better and

more virtuous life — more like the way in which I was brought up, Mr. Weller.”

“You must ha’ been verry nicely brought up,” said Sam.

“Oh, verry, Mr. Weller, verry,” replied Job; at the recollection of the purity of his youthful days, Mr. Trotter pulled forth the pink handkerchief, and wept copiously.

“You must ha’ been an uncommon nice boy to go to school vith,” said Sam.

“I was, sir,” replied Job, heaving a deep sigh. “I was the idol of the place.”

“Ah,” said Sam, “I don’t wonder at it. What a comfort you must ha’ been to your blessed mother!”

At these words, Mr. Job Trotter inserted an end of the pink handkerchief into the corner of each eye, one after the other, and began to weep copiously.

“Wot’s the matter vith the man,” said Sam, indignantly. “Chelsea water-works is nothin’ to you. What are you melting vith now — the consciousness o’ willany?”

“I cannot keep my feelings down, Mr. Weller,” said Job, after a short pause. “To think that my master should have suspected the conversation I had with yours, and so dragged me away in a post-chaise, and after persuading the sweet young lady to say she knew nothing of him, and bribing the school-mistress to do the same, deserted her for a better speculation, — oh! Mr. Weller, it makes me shudder.”

“Oh, that was the vay, was it?” said Mr. Weller.

“To be sure it was,” replied Job.

“Vell,” said Sam, as they had now arrived near the Hotel, “I vant to have a little bit o’ talk with you, Job; so if you’re not partickler engaged, I should like to see

you at the Great White Horse to-night, somewheres about eight o'clock."

"I shall be sure to come," said Job.

"Yes, you'd better," replied Sam, with a very meaning look, "or else I shall perhaps be askin' arter you, at the other side of the green gate, and then I might cut you out, you know."

"I shall be sure to be with you, sir," said Mr. Trotter; and wringing Sam's hand with the utmost fervor, he walked away.

"Take care, Job Trotter, take care," said Sam, looking after him, "or I shall be one too many for you this time: I shall, indeed." Having uttered this soliloquy, and looked after Job till he was to be seen no more, Mr. Weller made the best of his way to his master's bedroom.

"It's all in training, sir," said Sam.

"What's in training, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"I have found 'em out, sir," said Sam.

"Found out who?"

"That 'ere queer customer, and the melan-cholly chap with the black hair."

"Impossible, Sam!" said Mr. Pickwick, with the greatest energy. "Where are they, Sam; where are they?"

"Hush, hush!" replied Mr. Weller; and as he assisted Mr. Pickwick to dress, he detailed the plan of action on which he proposed to enter.

"But when is this to be done, Sam?" inquired Mr. Pickwick.

"All in good time, sir," replied Sam.

Whether it was done in good time, or not, will be seen hereafter.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEREIN MR. PETER MAGNUS GROWS JEALOUS, AND THE MIDDLE-AGED LADY APPREHENSIVE, WHICH BRINGS THE PICKWICKIANS WITHIN THE GRASP OF THE LAW.

WHEN Mr. Pickwick descended to the room in which he and Mr. Peter Magnus had spent the preceding evening, he found that gentleman with the major part of the contents of the two bags, the leathern hat-box, and the brown-paper parcel, displayed to all possible advantage on his person, while he himself was pacing up and down the room in a state of the utmost excitement and agitation.

“Good-morning, sir,” said Mr. Peter Magnus. “What do you think of this, sir?”

“Very effective indeed,” replied Mr. Pickwick, surveying the garments of Mr. Peter Magnus with a good-natured smile.

“Yes, I think it’ll do,” said Mr. Magnus. “Mr. Pickwick, sir, I have sent up my card.”

“Have you?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Yes; and the waiter brought back word, that she would see me at eleven — at eleven, sir; it only wants a quarter now.”

“Very near the time,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Yes, it is rather near,” replied Mr. Magnus, “rather too near to be pleasant — eh! Mr. Pickwick, sir?”

“Confidence is a great thing in these cases,” observed Mr. Pickwick.

“I believe it is, sir,” said Mr. Peter Magnus. “I am very confident, sir. Really, Mr. Pickwick, I do not see why a man should feel any fear in such a case as this, sir. What is it, sir? There’s nothing to be ashamed of; it’s a matter of mutual accommodation, nothing more. Husband on one side, wife on the other. That’s my view of the matter, Mr. Pickwick.”

“It is a very philosophical one,” replied Mr. Pickwick. “But breakfast is waiting, Mr. Magnus. Come.”

Down they sat to breakfast, but it was evident, notwithstanding the boasting of Mr. Peter Magnus, that he labored under a very considerable degree of nervousness, of which loss of appetite, a propensity to upset the tea-things, a spectral attempt at drollery, and an irresistible inclination to look at the clock, every other second, were among the principal symptoms.

“He — he — he,” tittered Mr. Magnus, affecting cheerfulness, and gasping with agitation. “It only wants two minutes, Mr. Pickwick. Am I pale, sir?”

“Not very,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

There was a brief pause.

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Pickwick! but have you ever done this sort of thing in your time?” said Mr. Magnus.

“You mean proposing?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Yes.”

“Never,” said Mr. Pickwick, with great energy, “never.”

“You have no idea, then, how it’s best to begin?” said Mr. Magnus.

“Why,” said Mr. Pickwick, “I may have formed some ideas upon the subject, but, as I never have sub-

mitted them to the test of experience, I should be sorry if you were induced to regulate your proceedings by them."

"I should feel very much obliged to you for any advice, sir," said Mr. Magnus, taking another look at the clock: the hand of which was verging on the five minutes past.

"Well, sir," said Mr. Pickwick, with the profound solemnity with which that great man could, when he pleased, render his remarks so deeply impressive: "I should commence, sir, with a tribute to the lady's beauty and excellent qualities; from them, sir, I should diverge to my own unworthiness."

"Very good," said Mr. Magnus.

"Unworthiness for *her* only, mind, sir," resumed Mr Pickwick; "for to show that I was not wholly unworthy, sir, I should take a brief review of my past life, and present condition. I should argue, by analogy, that to anybody else, I must be a very desirable object. I should then expatiate on the warmth of my love, and the depth of my devotion. Perhaps I might then be tempted to seize her hand."

"Yes, I see," said Mr. Magnus; "that would be a very great point."

"I should then, sir," continued Mr. Pickwick, growing warmer as the subject presented itself in more glowing colors before him — "I should then, sir, come to the plain and simple question, 'Will you have me?' I think I am justified in assuming that upon this, she would turn away her head."

"You think that may be taken for granted?" said Mr. Magnus; "because, if she did not do that at the right place, it would be embarrassing."

“I think she would,” said Mr. Pickwick. “Upon this, sir, I should squeeze her hand, and I think — I *think*, Mr. Magnus — that after I had done that, supposing there was no refusal, I should gently draw away the handkerchief, which my slight knowledge of human nature leads me to suppose the lady would be applying to her eyes at the moment, and steal a respectful kiss. I think I should kiss her, Mr. Magnus; and at this particular point, I am decidedly of opinion that if the lady were going to take me at all, she would murmur into my ears a bashful acceptance.”

Mr. Magnus started: gazed on Mr. Pickwick’s intelligent face, for a short time in silence: and then (the dial pointing to the ten minutes past) shook him warmly by the hand, and rushed desperately from the room.

Mr. Pickwick had taken a few strides to and fro; and the small hand of the clock following the latter part of his example, had arrived at the figure which indicates the half hour, when the door suddenly opened. He turned round to greet Mr. Peter Magnus, and encountered, in his stead, the joyous face of Mr. Tupman, the serene countenance of Mr. Winkle, and the intellectual lineaments of Mr. Snodgrass.

As Mr. Pickwick greeted them, Mr. Peter Magnus tripped into the room.

“My friends, the gentleman I was speaking of — Mr. Magnus,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Your servant, gentlemen,” said Mr. Magnus, evidently in a high state of excitement; “Mr. Pickwick, allow me to speak to you one moment, sir.”

As he said this, Mr. Magnus harnessed his forefinger to Mr. Pickwick’s button-hole, and, drawing him into a window recess, said:

“Congratulate me, Mr. Pickwick; I followed your advice to the very letter.”

“And it was all correct, was it?” inquired Mr. Pickwick.

“It was sir — could not possibly have been better,” replied Mr. Magnus; “Mr. Pickwick, she is mine.”

“I congratulate you with all my heart,” replied Mr. Pickwick, warmly shaking his new friend by the hand.

“You must see her, sir,” said Mr. Magnus; “this way, if you please. Excuse us for one instant, gentlemen.” Hurrying on in this way, Mr. Peter Magnus drew Mr. Pickwick from the room. He paused at the next door in the passage, and tapped gently thereat.

“Come in!” said a female voice. And in they went.

“Miss Witherfield,” said Mr. Magnus, “Allow me to introduce my very particular friend, Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick, I beg to make you known to Miss Witherfield.”

The lady was at the upper end of the room. As Mr. Pickwick bowed, he took his spectacles from his waistcoat pocket, and put them on; a process which he had no sooner gone through, than, uttering an exclamation of surprise, Mr. Pickwick retreated several paces: and the lady, with a half-suppressed scream, hid her face in her hands, and dropped into a chair: whereupon Mr. Peter Magnus was stricken motionless on the spot, and gazed from one to the other, with a countenance expressive of the extremities of horror and surprise.

This certainly was, to all appearance, very unaccountable behavior; but the fact is, that Mr. Pickwick no sooner put on his spectacles, than he at once recognized in the future Mrs. Magnus the lady into whose room he had so unwarrantably intruded on the previous night;

and the spectacles had no sooner crossed Mr. Pickwick's nose, than the lady at once identified the countenance which she had seen surrounded by all the horrors of a nightcap. So the lady screamed, and Mr. Pickwick started.

"Mr. Pickwick!" exclaimed Mr. Magnus, lost in astonishment, "What is the meaning of this, sir? What is the meaning of it, sir?" added Mr. Magnus, in a threatening, and a louder tone.

"Sir," said Mr. Pickwick, somewhat indignant at the very sudden manner in which Mr. Peter Magnus had conjugated himself into the imperative mood, "I decline answering that question."

"You decline it, sir?" said Mr. Magnus.

"I do, sir," replied Mr. Pickwick; "I object to saying anything which may compromise that lady, or awaken unpleasant recollections in her breast, without her consent and permission."

"Miss Witherfield," said Mr. Peter Magnus, "do you know this person?"

"Know him!" repeated the middle-aged lady, hesitating.

"Yes, know him, ma'am. I said know him," replied Mr. Magnus, with ferocity.

"I have seen him," replied the middle-aged lady.

"Where?" inquired Mr. Magnus, "where?"

"That," said the middle-aged lady, rising from her seat, and averting her head, "that I would not reveal for worlds."

"I understand you, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, "and respect your delicacy; it shall never be revealed by me, depend upon it."

"Upon my word, ma'am," said Mr. Magnus, "consider-

ing the situation in which I am placed, with regard to yourself, you carry this matter off with tolerable coolness — tolerable coolness, ma'am."

"Cruel Mr. Magnus!" said the middle-aged lady; here she wept very copiously indeed.

"Address your observations to me, sir," interposed Mr. Pickwick; "I alone am to blame, if anybody be."

"Oh! you alone are to blame, are you, sir?" said Mr. Magnus; "I — I — see through this, sir. You repent of your determination now, do you?"

"My determination!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Your determination, sir. Oh! don't stare at me, sir," said Mr. Magnus; "I recollect your words last night, sir. You came down here, sir, to expose the treachery and falsehood of an individual on whose truth and honor you had placed implicit reliance — eh?" Here Mr. Peter Magnus indulged in a prolonged sneer; and taking off his green spectacles — which he probably found superfluous in his fit of jealousy — rolled his little eyes about, in a manner which was frightful to behold.

"Eh?" said Mr. Magnus; and then he repeated the sneer with increased effect. "But you shall answer it, sir."

"Answer what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Never mind, sir," replied Mr. Magnus, striding up and down the room. "Never mind."

There must be something very comprehensive in this phrase of "Never mind," for we do not recollect to have ever witnessed a quarrel in the street, at a theatre, public room, or elsewhere, in which it has not been the standard reply to all belligerent inquiries. "Do you call yourself a gentleman, sir?" — "Never mind, sir." "Did I offer to say anything to the young woman, sir?" — "Never

mind, sir." "Do you want your head knocked up against that wall, sir?" — "Never mind, sir." It is observable, too, that there would appear to be some hidden taunt in this universal "Never mind," which rouses more indignation in the bosom of the individual addressed, than the most lavish abuse could possibly awaken.

We do not mean to assert that the application of this brevity to himself, struck exactly that indignation to Mr. Pickwick's soul, which it would infallibly have roused in a vulgar breast. We merely record the fact that Mr. Pickwick opened the room-door, and abruptly called out, "Tupman come here!"

Mr. Tupman immediately presented himself, with a look of very considerable surprise.

"Tupman," said Mr. Pickwick, "a secret of some delicacy, in which that lady is concerned, is the cause of a difference which has just arisen between this gentleman and myself. When I assure him, in your presence, that it has no relation to himself, and is not in any way connected with his affairs, I need hardly beg you to take notice that if he continue to dispute it, he expresses a doubt of my veracity, which I shall consider extremely insulting." As Mr. Pickwick said this, he looked encyclopædias at Mr. Peter Magnus.

Mr. Pickwick's upright and honorable bearing, coupled with that force and energy of speech which so eminently distinguished him, would have carried conviction to any reasonable mind; but unfortunately at that particular moment, the mind of Mr. Peter Magnus was in anything but reasonable order. Consequently, instead of receiving Mr. Pickwick's explanation as he ought to have done, he forthwith proceeded to work himself into a red-hot, scorching, consuming passion, and to talk about what was due



to his own feelings, and all that sort of thing : adding force to his declamation by striding to and fro, and pulling his hair—amusements which he would vary occasionally, by shaking his fist in Mr. Pickwick's philanthropic countenance.

Mr. Pickwick, in his turn, conscious of his own innocence and rectitude, and irritated by having unfortunately involved the middle-aged lady in such an unpleasant affair, was not so quietly disposed as was his wont. The consequence was, that words ran high, and voices higher; and at length Mr. Magnus told Mr. Pickwick he should hear from him : to which Mr. Pickwick replied, with laudable politeness, that the sooner he heard from him the better ; whereupon the middle-aged lady rushed in terror from the room, out of which Mr. Tupman dragged Mr. Pickwick, leaving Mr. Peter Magnus to himself and meditation.

If the middle-aged lady had mingled much with the busy world, or had profited at all, by the manners and customs of those who make the laws and set the fashions, she would have known that this sort of ferocity is the most harmless thing in nature ; but as she had lived for the most part in the country, and never read the parliamentary debates, she was little versed in these particular refinements of civilized life. Accordingly, when she had gained her bedchamber, bolted herself in, and begun to meditate on the scene she had just witnessed, the most terrific pictures of slaughter and destruction presented themselves to her imagination ; among which, a full-length portrait of Mr. Peter Magnus borne home by four men, with the embellishment of a whole barrel-full of bullets in his left side, was among the very least. The more the middle-aged lady meditated, the more terrified

she became ; and at length she determined to repair to the house of the principal magistrate of the town, and request him to secure the persons of Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, without delay.

To this decision, the middle-aged lady was impelled by a variety of considerations, the chief of which, was the incontestable proof it would afford of her devotion to Mr. Peter Magnus, and her anxiety for his safety. She was too well acquainted with his jealous temperament to venture the slightest allusion to the real cause of her agitation on beholding Mr. Pickwick ; and she trusted to her own influence and power of persuasion with the little man, to quell his boisterous jealousy, supposing that Mr. Pickwick were removed, and no fresh quarrel could arise. Filled with these reflections, the middle-aged lady arrayed herself in her bonnet and shawl, and repaired to the Mayor's dwelling straightway.

Now George Nupkins, Esquire, the principal magistrate aforesaid, was as grand a personage as the fastest walker would find out, between sunrise and sunset, on the twenty-first of June, which being, according to the almanacs, the longest day in the whole year, would naturally afford him the longest period for his search. On this particular morning Mr. Nupkins was in a state of the utmost excitement and irritation, for there had been a rebellion in the town ; all the day-scholars at the largest day-school, had conspired to break the windows of an obnoxious apple-seller ; and had hooted the beadle, and pelted the constabulary — an elderly gentleman in top-boots, who had been called out to repress the tumult, and who had been a peace-officer, man and boy, for half a century at least. And Mr. Nupkins was sitting in his easy chair, frowning with majesty, and boiling with rage,

when a lady was announced on pressing, private, and particular business. Mr. Nupkins looked calmly terrible, and commanded that the lady should be shown in: which command, like all the mandates of emperors, and magistrates, and other great potentates of the earth, was forthwith obeyed; and Miss Witherfield, interestingly agitated, was ushered in accordingly.

“Muzzle!” said the magistrate.

Muzzle was an under-sized footman, with a long body and short legs.

“Muzzle!”

“Yes, your worship.”

“Place a chair and leave the room.”

“Yes, your worship.”

“Now, ma’am, will you state your business?” said the magistrate.

“It is of a very painful kind, sir,” said Miss Witherfield.

“Very likely, ma’am,” said the magistrate. “Compose your feelings, ma’am.” Here Mr. Nupkins looked benignant. “And then tell me what legal business brings you here, ma’am.” Here the magistrate triumphed over the man; and he looked stern again.

“It is very distressing to me, sir, to give this information,” said Miss Witherfield, “but I fear a duel is going to be fought here.”

“Here, ma’am?” said the magistrate. “Where, ma’am?”

“In Ipswich.”

“In Ipswich, ma’am — a duel in Ipswich!” said the magistrate, perfectly aghast at the notion. “Impossible, ma’am; nothing of the kind can be contemplated in this town, I am persuaded. Bless my soul, ma’am, are you

aware of the activity of our local magistracy? Do you happen to have heard, ma'am, that I rushed into a prize-ring on the fourth of May last, attended by only sixty special constables; and, at the hazard of falling a sacrifice to the angry passions of an infuriated multitude, prohibited a pugilistic contest between the Middlesex Dumpling and the Suffolk Bantam? A duel in Ipswich, ma'am! I don't think — I do *not* think," said the magistrate, reasoning with himself, "that any two men can have had the hardihood to plan such a breach of the peace, in this town."

"My information is unfortunately but too correct," said the middle-aged lady, "I was present at the quarrel."

"It's a most extraordinary thing," said the astounded magistrate. "Muzzle!"

"Yes, your worship."

"Send Mr. Jinks here, directly — instantly."

"Yes, your worship."

Muzzle retired; and a pale, sharp-nosed, half-fed, shabbily-clad clerk, of middle age, entered the room.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate. "Mr. Jinks!"

"Sir," said Mr. Jinks.

"This lady, Mr. Jinks, has come here, to give information of an intended duel in this town."

Mr. Jinks, not exactly knowing what to do, smiled a dependent's smile.

"What are you laughing at, Mr. Jinks?" said the magistrate.

Mr. Jinks looked serious instantly.

"Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, "you're a fool."

Mr. Jinks looked humbly at the great man, and bit the top of his pen.

“ You may see something very comical in this information, sir ; but I can tell you this, Mr. Jinks, that you have very little to laugh at,” said the magistrate.

The hungry-looking Jinks sighed, as if he were quite aware of the fact of his having very little indeed to be merry about ; and, being ordered to take the lady’s information, shambled to a seat, and proceeded to write it down.

“ This man, Pickwick, is the principal, I understand,” said the magistrate, when the statement was finished.

“ He is,” said the middle-aged lady.

“ And the other rioter — what’s his name, Mr. Jinks ?”

“ Tupman, sir.”

“ Tupman is the second ?”

“ Yes.”

“ The other principal you say, has absconded, ma’am ?”

“ Yes,” replied Miss Witherfield, with a short cough.

“ Very well,” said the magistrate. “ These are two cut-throats from London, who have come down here to destroy his Majesty’s population : thinking that at this distance from the capital, the arm of the law is weak and paralyzed. They shall be made an example of. Draw up the warrants, Mr. Jinks. Muzzle !”

“ Yes, your worship.”

“ Is Grummer down-stairs ?”

“ Yes, your worship.”

“ Send him up.”

The obsequious Muzzle retired, and presently returned, introducing the elderly gentleman in the top-boots, who was chiefly remarkable for a bottle-nose, a hoarse voice, a snuff-colored surtout, and a wandering eye.

“ Grummer,” said the magistrate.

“ Your wash-up.”

“Is the town quiet now?”

“Pretty well, your wash-up,” replied Grummer. “Pop’lar feeling has in a measure subsided, consekens o’ the boys having dispersed to cricket.”

“Nothing but vigorous measures will do in these times, Grummer,” said the magistrate, in a determined manner. “If the authority of the king’s officers is set at nought, we must have the Riot Act read. If the civil power cannot protect these windows, Grummer, the military must protect the civil power, and the windows too. I believe that is a maxim of the constitution, Mr. Jinks?”

“Certainly, sir,” said Jinks.

“Very good,” said the magistrate, signing the warrants. “Grummer, you will bring these persons before me this afternoon. You will find them at the Great White Horse. You recollect the case of the Middlesex Dumpling and the Suffolk Bantam, Grummer?”

Mr. Grummer intimated, by a retrospective shake of the head, that he should never forget it — as indeed it was not likely he would, so long as it continued to be cited daily.

“This is even more unconstitutional,” said the magistrate; “this is even a greater breach of the peace, and a grosser infringement of his Majesty’s prerogative. I believe duelling is one of his Majesty’s most undoubted prerogatives, Mr. Jinks?”

“Expressly stipulated in Magna Charta, sir,” said Mr. Jinks.

“One of the brightest jewels in the British crown, wrung from his Majesty by the Barons, I believe, Mr. Jinks?” said the magistrate.

“Just so, sir,” replied Mr. Jinks.

“Very well,” said the magistrate, drawing himself up

proudly, "it shall not be violated in this portion of his dominions. Grummer, procure assistance, and execute these warrants with as little delay as possible. Muz-zle!"

"Yes, your worship."

"Show the lady out."

Miss Witherfield retired, deeply impressed with the magistrate's learning and research; Mr. Nupkins retired to lunch; Mr. Jinks retired within himself — that being the only retirement he had, except the sofa-bedstead in the small parlor which was occupied by his landlady's family in the daytime — and Mr. Grummer retired, to wipe out, by his mode of discharging his present commission, the insult which had been fastened upon himself, and the other representative of his Majesty — the beadle — in the course of the morning.

While these resolute and determined preparations for the conservation of the King's peace, were pending, Mr. Pickwick and his friends, wholly unconscious of the mighty events in progress, had sat quietly down to dinner; and very talkative and companionable they all were. Mr. Pickwick was in the very act of relating his adventure of the preceding night, to the great amusement of his followers: Mr. Tupman especially: when the door opened, and a somewhat forbidding countenance peeped into the room. The eyes in the forbidding countenance looked very earnestly at Mr. Pickwick, for several seconds, and were to all appearance satisfied with their investigation; for the body to which the forbidding countenance belonged, slowly brought itself into the apartment, and presented the form of an elderly individual in top-boots — not to keep the reader any longer in suspense, in short, the eyes were the wandering eyes of Mr.

Grummer, and the body was the body of the same gentleman.

Mr. Grummer's mode of proceeding was professional, but peculiar. His first act was to bolt the door on the inside; his second, to polish his head and countenance very carefully with a cotton handkerchief; his third, to place his hat, with the cotton handkerchief in it, on the nearest chair; and his fourth to produce from the breast-pocket of his coat a short truncheon surmounted by a brazen crown, with which he beckoned to Mr. Pickwick with a grave and ghost-like air.

Mr. Snodgrass was the first to break the astonished silence. He looked steadily at Mr. Grummer for a brief space, and then said emphatically: "This is a private room, sir — a private room."

Mr. Grummer shook his head, and replied, "No room's private to His Majesty when the street-door's once passed. That's law. Some people maintains that an Englishman's house is his castle. That's gammon."

The Pickwickians gazed on each other, with wondering eyes.

"Which is Mr. Tupman?" inquired Mr. Grummer. He had an intuitive perception of Mr. Pickwick; he knew him at once.

"My name's Tupman," said that gentleman.

"My name's Law," said Mr. Grummer.

"What?" said Mr. Tupman.

"Law," replied Mr. Grummer, "law, civil power, and exeekative; them's my titles; here's my authority. Blank Tupman, blank Pickvick — against the peace of our sufferin' Lord the King — staitit in that case made and purwided — and all regular. I apprehend you Pickvick! Tupman — the aforesaid."



“What do you mean by this insolence?” said Mr. Tupman, starting up: “Leave the room!”

“Halloo,” said Mr. Grummer, retreating very expeditiously to the door, and opening it an inch or two, “Dubbley.”

“Well,” said a deep voice from the passage.

“Come for’ard, Dubbley,” said Mr. Grummer.

At the word of command, a dirty-faced man, some thing over six feet high, and stout in proportion, squeezed himself through the half-open door: making his face very red in the process: and entered the room.

“Is the other specials outside, Dubbley?” inquired Mr. Grummer.

Mr. Dubbley, who was a man of few words, nodded assent.

“Order in the division under your charge, Dubbley,” said Mr. Grummer.

Mr. Dubbley did as he was desired; and half a dozen men, each with a short truncheon and a brass crown, flocked into the room. Mr. Grummer pocketed his staff, and looked at Mr. Dubbley; Mr. Dubbley pocketed *his* staff, and looked at the division; and the division pocketed *their* staves, and looked at Messrs. Tupman and Pickwick.

Mr. Pickwick and his followers, rose as one man.

“What is the meaning of this atrocious intrusion upon my privacy?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Who dares apprehend me?” said Mr. Tupman.

“What do you want here, Scoundrels?” said Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Winkle said nothing, but he fixed his eyes on Grummer, and bestowed a look upon him, which if he

had had any feeling, must have pierced his brain. As it was, however, it had no visible effect upon him whatever.

When the executive perceived that Mr. Pickwick and his friends were disposed to resist the authority of the law, they very significantly turned up their coat-sleeves, as if knocking them down in the first instance, and taking them up afterwards, were a mere professional act which had only to be thought of, to be done, as a matter of course. This demonstration was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He conferred a few moments with Mr. Tupman apart, and then signified his readiness to proceed to the Mayor's residence: merely begging the parties then and there assembled, to take notice, that it was his firm intention to resent this monstrous invasion of his privileges as an Englishman, the instant he was at liberty; whereat the parties then and there assembled laughed very heartily, with the single exception of Mr. Grummer, who seemed to consider that any slight cast upon the divine right of magistrates, was a species of blasphemy, not to be tolerated.

But when Mr. Pickwick had signified his readiness to bow to the laws of his country; and just when the waiters, and hostlers, and chamber-maids, and post-boys, who had anticipated a delightful commotion from his threatened obstinacy, began to turn away, disappointed and disgusted; a difficulty arose which had not been foreseen. With every sentiment of veneration for the constituted authorities, Mr. Pickwick resolutely protested against making his appearance in the public streets, surrounded and guarded by the officers of justice, like a common criminal. Mr. Grummer, in the then disturbed state of public feeling (for it was half-holiday, and the boys had not yet gone home), as reso-

lutely protested against walking on the opposite side of the way, and taking Mr. Pickwick's parole that he would go straight to the magistrate's; and both Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman as strenuously objected to the expense of a post-coach, which was the only respectable conveyance that could be obtained. The dispute ran high, and the dilemma lasted long; and just as the executive were on the point of overcoming Mr. Pickwick's objection to walking to the magistrate's by the trite expedient of carrying him thither, it was recollected that there stood in the inn-yard, an old sedan-chair, which having been originally built for a gouty gentleman with funded property, would hold Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman, at least as conveniently as a modern post-chaise. The chair was hired, and brought into the hall; Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman squeezed themselves inside, and pulled down the blinds; a couple of chairmen were speedily found; and the procession started in grand order. The specials surrounded the body of the vehicle; Mr. Grummer and Mr. Dubbley marched triumphantly in front; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle walked arm-in-arm behind; and the unsoaped of Ipswich brought up the rear.

The shopkeepers of the town, although they had a very indistinct notion of the nature of the offence, could not but be much edified and gratified by this spectacle. Here was the strong arm of the law, coming down with twenty gold-beater force, upon two offenders from the metropolis itself; the mighty engine was directed by their own magistrate, and worked by their own officers; and both the criminals by their united efforts were securely shut up, in the narrow compass of one sedan-chair. Many were the expressions of approval and admiration which greeted Mr. Grummer, as he headed the cavalcade, staff

in hand ; loud and long were the shouts which were raised by the unsoaped : and amidst these united testimonials of public approbation, the procession moved slowly and majestically along.

Mr. Weller, habited in his morning jacket with the black calico sleeves, was returning in a rather desponding state from an unsuccessful survey of the mysterious house with the green gate, when, raising his eyes, he beheld a crowd pouring down the street, surrounding an object which had very much the appearance of a sedan-chair. Willing to divert his thoughts from the failure of his enterprise, he stepped aside to see the crowd pass ; and finding that they were cheering away, very much to their own satisfaction, forthwith began (by way of raising his spirits) to cheer too, with all his might and main.

Mr. Grummer passed, and Mr. Dubbley passed, and the sedan passed, and the body-guard of specials passed, and Sam was still responding to the enthusiastic cheers of the mob, and waving his hat about as if he were in the very last extreme of the wildest joy (though, of course, he had not the faintest idea of the matter in hand), when he was suddenly stopped by the unexpected appearance of Mr. Winkle and Mr. Snodgrass.

“What’s the row, gen’l’m’n?” cried Sam. “Who have they got in this here watch-box in mournin’?”

Both gentlemen replied together, but their words were lost in the tumult.

“Who?” cried Sam again.

Once more, was a joint reply returned ; and though the words were inaudible, Sam saw by the motion of the two pairs of lips that they had uttered the magic word “Pickwick.”

This was enough. In another minute Mr. Weller had

made his way through the crowd, stopped the chairmen and confronted the portly Grummer.

“Hallo, old gen’l’m’n!” said Sam. “Who have you got in this here conveyance?”

“Stand back,” said Mr. Grummer, whose dignity, like the dignity of a great many other men, had been wondrously augmented by a little popularity.

“Knock him down, if he don’t,” said Mr. Dubbley.

“I’m wery much obliged to you, old gen’l’m’n,” replied Sam, “for consulting my convenienc, and I’m still more obliged to the other gen’l’m’n who looks as if he’d just escaped from a giant’s carrywan, for his wery ’an’some suggestion; but I should prefer your givin’ me a answer to my question, if it’s all the same to you.—How are you, sir?” This last observation was addressed with a patronizing air to Mr. Pickwick, who was peeping through the front window.

Mr. Grummer, perfectly speechless with indignation, dragged the truncheon with the brass crown, from its particular pocket, and flourished it before Sam’s eyes.

“Ah,” said Sam, “it’s wery pretty, ’specially the crown, which is uncommon like the real one.”

“Stand back!” said the outraged Mr. Grummer. By way of adding force to the command, he thrust the brass emblem of royalty into Sam’s neckcloth with one hand, and seized Sam’s collar with the other: a compliment which Mr. Weller returned by knocking him down out of hand: having previously, with the utmost consideration, knocked down a chairman for him to lie upon.

Whether Mr. Winkle was seized with a temporary attack of that species of insanity which originates in a sense of injury, or animated by this display of Mr. Weller’s valor, is uncertain; but certain it is, that he no

sooner saw Mr. Grummer fall, than he made a terrific onslaught on a small boy who stood next him ; whereupon Mr. Snodgrass, in a truly Christian spirit, and in order that he might take no one unawares, announced in a very loud tone that he was going to begin, and proceeded to take off his coat with the utmost deliberation. He was immediately surrounded and secured ; and it is but common justice both to him and Mr. Winkle to say, that they did not make the slightest attempt to rescue either themselves or Mr. Weller : who, after a most vigorous resistance, was overpowered by numbers, and taken prisoner. The procession then re-formed ; the chairmen resumed their stations ; and the march was recommenced.

Mr. Pickwick's indignation during the whole of this proceeding, was beyond all bounds. He could just see Sam upsetting the specials, and flying about, in every direction ; and that was all he could see, for the sedan doors wouldn't open, and the blinds wouldn't pull up. At length, with the assistance of Mr. Tupman, he managed to push open the roof ; and mounting on the seat, and steadying himself as well as he could, by placing his hand on that gentleman's shoulder, Mr. Pickwick proceeded to address the multitude ; to dwell upon the unjustifiable manner in which he had been treated ; and to call upon them to take notice that his servant had been first assaulted. In this order they reached the magistrate's house ; the chairmen trotting, the prisoners following, Mr. Pickwick oratorizing, and the crowd shouting.

## CHAPTER XXV.

SHOWING, AMONG A VARIETY OF PLEASANT MATTERS,  
HOW MAJESTIC AND IMPARTIAL MR. NUPKINS WAS;  
AND HOW MR. WELLER RETURNED MR. JOB TROT-  
TER'S SHUTTLECOCK, AS HEAVILY AS IT CAME.  
WITH ANOTHER MATTER, WHICH WILL BE FOUND  
IN ITS PLACE.

VIOLENT was Mr. Weller's indignation as he was borne along; numerous were the allusions to the personal appearance and demeanor of Mr. Grummer and his companion: and valorous were the defiances to any six of the gentlemen present: in which he vented his dissatisfaction. Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle listened with gloomy respect to the torrent of eloquence which their leader poured forth, from the sedan-chair, and the rapid course of which, not all Mr. Tupman's earnest entreaties to have the lid of the vehicle closed, were able to check for an instant. But Mr. Weller's anger quickly gave way to curiosity, when the procession turned down the identical court-yard in which he had met with the runaway Job Trotter: and curiosity was exchanged for a feeling of the most gleeful astonishment, when the all-important Mr. Grummer, commanding the sedan-bearers to halt, advanced with dignified and portentous steps, to the very green gate from which

Job Trotter had emerged, and gave a mighty pull at the bell-handle which hung at the side thereof. The ring was answered by a very smart and pretty-faced servant-girl, who, after holding up her hands in astonishment at the rebellious appearance of the prisoners, and the impassioned language of Mr. Pickwick, summoned Mr. Muzzle. Mr. Muzzle opened one half of the carriage gate, to admit the sedan, the captured ones, and the specials; and immediately slammed it in the faces of the mob, who, indignant at being excluded, and anxious to see what followed, relieved their feelings by kicking at the gate and ringing the bell, for an hour or two afterwards. In this amusement they all took part by turns, except three or four fortunate individuals, who, having discovered a grating in the gate which commanded a view of nothing, stared through it, with the indefatigable perseverance with which people will flatten their noses against the front windows of a chemist's shop, when a drunken man, who has been run over by a dog-cart in the street, is undergoing a surgical inspection in the back-parlor.

At the foot of a flight of steps, leading to the house-door, which was guarded on either side by an American aloe in a green tub, the sedan-chair stopped. Mr. Pickwick and his friends were conducted into the hall, whence, having been previously announced by Muzzle, and ordered in by Mr. Nupkins, they were ushered into the worshipful presence of that public-spirited officer.

The scene was an impressive one, well calculated to strike terror to the hearts of culprits, and to impress them with an adequate idea of the stern majesty of the law. In front of a big bookcase, in a big chair, behind



a big table, and before a big volume, sat Mr. Nupkins, looking a full size larger than any one of them, big as they were. The table was adorned with piles of papers: and above the farther end of it, appeared the head and shoulders of Mr. Jinks, who was busily engaged in looking as busy as possible. The party having all entered, Muzzle carefully closed the door, and placed himself behind his master's chair to await his orders. Mr. Nupkins threw himself back, with thrilling solemnity, and scrutinized the faces of his unwilling visitors.

"Now, Grummer, who is that person?" said Mr. Nupkins, pointing to Mr. Pickwick, who, as the spokesman of his friends, stood hat in hand, bowing with the utmost politeness and respect.

"This here's Pickvick, your wash-up," said Grummer.

"Come, none o' that 'ere, old Strike-a-light," interposed Mr. Weller, elbowing himself into the front rank. "Beg your pardon, sir, but this here officer o' yourn in the gambooge tops, 'ull never earn a decent livin' as a master o' the ceremonies anyvere. This here, sir," continued Mr. Weller, thrusting Grummer aside, and addressing the magistrate with pleasant familiarity, "This here is S. Pickvick, Esquire; this here's Mr. Tupman; that 'ere's Mr. Snodgrass; and funder on, next him on the t'other side, Mr. Winkle — all verry nice gen'l'm'n, sir, as you'll be verry happy to have the acquaintance on; so the sooner you commits these here officers o' yourn to the tread-mill for a month or two, the sooner we shall begin to be on a pleasant understanding. Business first, pleasure arterwards, as King Richard the Third said wen he stabbed the t'other king in the Tower, afore he smothered the babbies."

At the conclusion of this address, Mr. Weller brushed his hat with his right elbow, and nodded benignly to Jinks, who had heard him throughout with unspeakable awe.

“Who is this man, Grummer?” said the magistrate.

“Wery desp’rate ch’racter, your wash-up,” replied Grummer. “He attempted to rescue the prisoners, and assaulted the officers; so we took him into custody, and brought him here.”

“You did quite right,” replied the magistrate. “He is evidently a desperate ruffian.”

“He is my servant, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, angrily.

“Oh! he is your servant, is he?” said Mr. Nupkins. “A conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice, and murder its officers. Pickwick’s servant. Put that down, Mr. Jinks.”

Mr. Jinks did so.

“What’s your name, fellow?” thundered Mr. Nupkins.

“Veller,” replied Sam.

“A very good name for the Newgate Calendar,” said Mr. Nupkins.

This was a joke; so Jinks, Grummer, Dubbley, all the specials, and Muzzle, went into fits of laughter of five minutes’ duration.

“Put down his name, Mr. Jinks,” said the magistrate.

“Two L’s, old feller,” said Sam.

Here an unfortunate special laughed again, whereupon the magistrate threatened to commit him, instantly. It is a dangerous thing to laugh at the wrong man, in these cases.

“Where do you live?” said the magistrate.

"Vare-ever I can," replied Sam.

"Put down that, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate, who was fast rising into a rage.

"Score it under," said Sam.

"He is a vagabond, Mr. Jinks," said the magistrate. "He is a vagabond on his own statement; is he not, Mr. Jinks?"

"Certainly, Sir."

"Then I'll commit him. I'll commit him, as such," said Mr. Nupkins.

"This is a wery impartial country for justice," said Sam. "There a'n't a magistrate going, as don't commit himself, twice as often as he commits other people."

At this sally another special laughed, and then tried to look so supernaturally solemn, that the magistrate detected him immediately.

"Grummer," said Mr. Nupkins, reddening with passion, "how dare you select such an inefficient and disreputable person for a special constable, as that man? How dare you do it, sir?"

"I am very sorry, your wash-up," stammered Grummer.

"Very sorry!" said the furious magistrate. "You shall repent of this neglect of duty, Mr. Grummer; you shall be made an example of. Take that fellow's staff away. He's drunk. You're drunk, fellow."

"I am not drunk, your worship," said the man.

"You *are* drunk," returned the magistrate. "How dare you say you are not drunk, sir, when I say you are? Doesn't he smell of spirits, Grummer?"

"Horrid, your wash-up," replied Grummer, who had a vague impression that there was a smell of rum somewhere.

“I knew he did,” said Mr. Nupkins. “I saw he was drunk when he first came into the room, by his excited eye. Did you observe his excited eye, Mr. Jinks?”

“Certainly, sir.”

“I haven’t touched a drop of spirits this morning,” said the man, who was as sober a fellow as need be.

“How dare you tell me a falsehood?” said Mr. Nupkins. “Isn’t he drunk at this moment, Mr. Jinks?”

“Certainly, sir,” replied Jinks.

“Mr. Jinks,” said the magistrate, “I shall commit that man for contempt. Make out his committal, Mr. Jinks.”

And committed the special would have been, only Jinks, who was the magistrate’s adviser (having had a legal education of three years in a country attorney’s office) whispered the magistrate that he thought it wouldn’t do; so the magistrate made a speech, and said, that in consideration of the special’s family, he would merely reprimand and discharge him. Accordingly, the special was abused, vehemently, for a quarter of an hour, and sent about his business: and Grummer, Dubbley, Muzzle, and all the other specials murmured their admiration of the magnanimity of Mr. Nupkins.

“Now, Mr. Jinks,” said the magistrate, “swear Grummer.”

Grummer was sworn directly; but as Grummer wandered, and Mr. Nupkins’s dinner was nearly ready, Mr. Nupkins cut the matter short by putting leading questions to Grummer, which Grummer answered as nearly in the affirmative as he could. So the examination went off, all very smooth and comfortable, and two assaults were proved against Mr. Weller, and a threat against Mr. Winkle, and a push against Mr. Snodgrass. When

all this was done to the magistrate's satisfaction, the magistrate and Mr. Jinks consulted in whispers.

The consultation having lasted about ten minutes, Mr. Jinks retired to his end of the table ; and the magistrate, with a preparatory cough, drew himself up in his chair, and was proceeding to commence his address, when Mr. Pickwick interposed.

"I beg your pardon, sir, for interrupting you," said Mr. Pickwick ; "but before you proceed to express and act upon any opinion you may have formed on the statements which have been made here, I must claim my right to be heard, so far as I am personally concerned."

"Hold your tongue, sir," said the magistrate, peremptorily.

"I must submit to you, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Hold your tongue, sir," interposed the magistrate, "or I shall order an officer to remove you."

"You may order your officers to do whatever you please, sir," said Mr. Pickwick ; "and I have no doubt, from the specimen I have had of the subordination preserved among them, that whatever you order, they will execute, sir ; but I shall take the liberty, sir, of claiming my right to be heard, until I am removed by force."

"Pickwick and principle," exclaimed Mr. Weller, in a very audible voice.

"Sam, be quiet," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Dumb as a drum with a hole in it, sir," replied Sam.

Mr. Nupkins looked at Mr. Pickwick with a gaze of intense astonishment, at his displaying such unwonted temerity ; and was apparently about to return a very angry reply, when Mr. Jinks pulled him by the sleeve, and whispered something in his ear. To this, the mag-

istrate returned a half-audible answer, and then the whispering was renewed. Jinks was evidently remonstrating.

At length the magistrate, gulping down, with a very bad grace, his disinclination to hear anything more, turned to Mr. Pickwick, and said sharply — “What do you want to say?”

“First,” said Mr. Pickwick, sending a look through his spectacles, under which even Nupkins quailed. “First, I wish to know what I and my friend have been brought here for?”

“Must I tell him?” whispered the magistrate to Jinks.

“I think you had better, sir,” whispered Jinks to the magistrate.

“An information has been sworn before me,” said the magistrate, “that it is apprehended you are going to fight a duel, and that the other man, Tupman, is your aider and abettor in it. Therefore — eh, Mr. Jinks?”

“Certainly, sir.”

“Therefore, I call upon you both, to — I think that’s the course, Mr. Jinks?”

“Certainly, sir.”

“To — to — what Mr. Jinks?” said the magistrate, pettishly.

“To find bail, sir.”

“Yes. Therefore, I call upon you both — as I was about to say, when I was interrupted by my clerk — to find bail.”

“Good bail,” whispered Mr. Jinks.

“I shall require good bail,” said the magistrate.

“Town’s-people,” whispered Jinks.

“They must be town’s-people,” said the magistrate.

“Fifty pounds each,” whispered Jinks, “and householders, of course.”

“I shall require two sureties of fifty pounds each,” said the magistrate aloud, with great dignity, “and they must be householders, of course.”

“But, bless my heart, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, who, together with Mr. Tupman, was all amazement and indignation; “we are perfect strangers in this town. I have as little knowledge of any householders here, as I have intention of fighting a duel with anybody.”

“I dare say,” replied the magistrate, “I dare say — don’t you, Mr. Jinks?”

“Certainly, sir.”

“Have you anything more to say?” inquired the magistrate.

Mr. Pickwick *had* a great deal more to say, which he would no doubt have said, very little to his own advantage, or the magistrate’s satisfaction, if he had not, the moment he ceased speaking, been pulled by the sleeve by Mr. Weller, with whom he was immediately engaged in so earnest a conversation, that he suffered the magistrate’s inquiry to pass wholly unnoticed. Mr. Nupkins was not the man to ask a question of the kind twice over; and so, with another preparatory cough, he proceeded, amidst the reverential and admiring silence of the constables, to pronounce his decision.

He should fine Weller two pounds for the first assault, and three pounds for the second. He should fine Winkle two pounds, and Snodgrass one pound, besides requiring them to enter into their own recognizances to keep the peace towards all his Majesty’s subjects, and especially towards his liege servant, Daniel Grummer Pickwick and Tupman he had already held to bail.

Immediately on the magistrate ceasing to speak, Mr. Pickwick, with a smile mantling on his again-good-humored countenance, stepped forward, and said :

“I beg the magistrate’s pardon, but may I request a few minutes’ private conversation with him, on a matter of deep importance to himself?”

“What!” said the magistrate.

Mr. Pickwick repeated his request.

“This is a most extraordinary request,” said the magistrate, “A private interview!”

“A private interview,” replied Mr. Pickwick, firmly ; “only, as a part of the information which I wish to communicate is derived from my servant, I should wish him to be present.”

The magistrate looked at Mr. Jinks ; Mr. Jinks looked at the magistrate ; and the officers looked at each other in amazement. Mr. Nupkins turned suddenly pale. Could the man Weller, in a moment of remorse, have divulged some secret conspiracy for his assassination? It was a dreadful thought. He was a public man ; and he turned paler, as he thought of Julius Cæsar and Mr. Perceval.

The magistrate looked at Mr. Pickwick again, and beckoned Mr. Jinks.

“What do you think of this request, Mr. Jinks?” murmured Mr. Nupkins.

Mr. Jinks, who didn’t exactly know what to think of it, and was afraid he might offend, smiled feebly, after a dubious fashion, and, screwing up the corners of his mouth, shook his head slowly from side to side.

“Mr. Jinks,” said the magistrate, gravely, “you are an ass.”

At this little expression of opinion, Mr. Jinks smiled



again — rather more feebly than before — and edged himself, by degrees, back into his own corner.

Mr. Nupkins debated the matter within himself for a few seconds, and then, rising from his chair, and requesting Mr. Pickwick and Sam to follow him, led the way into a small room which opened into the justice-parlor. Desiring Mr. Pickwick to walk to the upper end of the little apartment, and holding his hand upon the half-closed door, that he might be able to effect an immediate escape, in case there was the least tendency to a display of hostilities, Mr. Nupkins expressed his readiness to hear the communication, whatever it might be.

“I will come to the point at once, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick; “it affects yourself, and your credit, materially. I have every reason to believe, sir, that you are harboring in your house, a gross impostor!”

“Two,” interrupted Sam, “Mulberry ag’in’ all natur’, for tears and willany.”

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, “if I am to render myself intelligible to this gentleman, I must beg you to control your feelings.”

“Wery sorry, sir,” replied Mr. Weller; “but when I think o’ that ’ere Job, I can’t help opening the walve a inch or two.”

“In one word, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, “is my servant right in suspecting that a certain Captain Fitz-Marshall is in the habit of visiting here? Because,” added Mr. Pickwick, as he saw that Mr. Nupkins was about to offer a very indignant interruption, “because, if he be, I know that person to be a” —

“Hush, hush,” said Mr. Nupkins, closing the door. “Know him to be what, sir?”

“An unprincipled adventurer — a dishonorable char-

acter — a man who preys upon society, and makes easily-deceived people his dupes, sir; his absurd, his foolish, his wretched dupes, sir,” said the excited Mr. Pickwick.

“Dear me,” said Mr. Nupkins, turning very red, and altering his whole manner directly. “Dear me, Mr.” —

“Pickwick,” said Sam.

“Pickwick,” said the magistrate, “dear me, Mr. Pickwick — pray take a seat — you cannot mean this? Captain Fitz-Marshall?”

“Don’t call him a cap’en,” said Sam, “nor Fitz-Marshall neither; he a’n’t neither one nor t’other. He’s a strolling actor, he is, and his name’s Jingle; and if ever there was a wolf in a mulberry suit, that ’ere Job Trotter’s him.”

“It is very true, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, replying to the magistrate’s look of amazement; “my only business in this town, is to expose the person of whom we now speak.”

Mr. Pickwick proceeded to pour into the horror-stricken ear of Mr. Nupkins, an abridged account of Mr. Jingle’s atrocities. He related how he had first met him; how he had eloped with Miss Wardle; how he had cheerfully resigned the lady for a pecuniary consideration; how he had entrapped him into a lady’s boarding-school at midnight; and how he (Mr. Pickwick) now felt it his duty to expose his assumption of his present name and rank.

As the narrative proceeded, all the warm blood in the body of Mr. Nupkins tingled up into the very tips of his ears. He had picked up the Captain at a neighboring race-course. Charmed with his long list of aristocratic acquaintance, his extensive travel, and his fashionable demeanor, Mrs. Nupkins and Miss Nupkins had exhibited

Captain Fitz-Marshall, and quoted Captain Fitz-Marshall, and hurled Captain Fitz-Marshall at the devoted heads of their select circle of acquaintance, until their bosom friends, Mrs. Porckenham and the Miss Porckenhams, and Mr. Sidney Porckenham, were ready to burst with jealousy and despair. And now, to hear, after all, that he was a needy adventurer, a strolling player, and if not a swindler, something so very like it, that it was hard to tell the difference! Heavens! what would the Porckenhams say! What would be the triumph of Mr. Sidney Porckenham when he found that his addresses had been slighted for such a rival! How should he, Nupkins, meet the eye of old Porckenham at the next Quarter Sessions! And what a handle would it be for the opposition magisterial party, if the story got abroad!

“But after all,” said Mr. Nupkins, brightening for a moment, after a long pause; “after all, this is a mere statement. Captain Fitz-Marshall is a man of very engaging manners, and, I dare say, has many enemies. What proof have you, of the truth of these representations?”

“Confront me with him,” said Mr. Pickwick, “that is all I ask, and all I require. Confront him with me, and my friends here; you will want no further proof.”

“Why,” said Mr. Nupkins, “that might be very easily done, for he will be here to-night, and then there would be no occasion to make the matter public, just — just — for the young man’s own sake, you know. I — I — should like to consult Mrs. Nupkins on the propriety of the step, in the first instance, though. At all events, Mr. Pickwick, we must despatch this legal business before we can do anything else. Pray step back into the next room.”

Into the next room they went.

"Grummer," said the magistrate, in an awful voice.

"Your wash-up," replied Grummer, with the smile of a favorite.

"Come, come, sir," said the magistrate, sternly, "don't let me see any of this levity here. It is very unbecoming, and I can assure you that you have very little to smile at. Was the account you gave me just now, strictly true? Now be careful, sir."

"Your wash-up," stammered Grummer, "I" —

"Oh, you are confused, are you?" said the magistrate.

"Mr. Jinks, you observe this confusion?"

"Certainly, sir," replied Jinks.

"Now," said the magistrate, "just repeat your statement, Grummer, and again I warn you to be careful. Mr. Jinks, take his words down."

The unfortunate Grummer proceeded to re-state his complaint, but, what between Mr. Jinks's taking down his words, and the magistrate's taking them up; his natural tendency to rambling, and his extreme confusion: he managed to get involved, in something under three minutes, in such a mass of entanglement and contradiction, that Mr. Nupkins at once declared he didn't believe him. so, the fines were remitted, and Mr. Jinks found a couple of bail in no time. And all these solemn proceedings having been satisfactorily concluded, Mr. Grummer was ignominiously ordered out — an awful instance of the instability of human greatness, and the uncertain tenure of great men's favor.

Mrs. Nupkins was a majestic female in a pink gauze turban and a light brown wig. Miss Nupkins possessed all her mamma's haughtiness without the turban, and all her ill-nature without the wig; and whenever the exer-

cise of these two amiable qualities involved mother and daughter in some unpleasant dilemma, as they not unfrequently did, they both concurred in laying the blame on the shoulders of Mr. Nupkins. Accordingly, when Mr. Nupkins sought Mrs. Nupkins, and detailed the communication which had been made by Mr. Pickwick, Mrs. Nupkins suddenly recollected that she had always expected something of the kind; that she had always said it would be so; that her advice was never taken; that she really did not know what Mr. Nupkins supposed she was; and so forth.

“The idea!” said Miss Nupkins, forcing a tear of very scanty proportions, into the corner of each eye, “the idea of my being made such a fool of!”

“Ah! you may thank your papa, my dear,” said Mrs. Nupkins; “how have I implored and begged that man to inquire into the Captain’s family connections; how have I urged and entreated him to take some decisive step! I am quite certain nobody would believe it—quite.”

“But, my dear,” said Mr. Nupkins.

“Don’t talk to me, you aggravating thing, don’t!” said Mrs. Nupkins.

“My love,” said Mr. Nupkins; “you professed yourself very fond of Captain Fitz-Marshall. You have constantly asked him here, my dear, and you have lost no opportunity of introducing him elsewhere.”

“Didn’t I say so, Henrietta?” cried Mrs. Nupkins, appealing to her daughter with the air of a much-injured female. “Didn’t I say that your papa would turn round, and lay all this at my door? Didn’t I say so?” Here Mrs. Nupkins sobbed.

“Oh pa!” remonstrated Miss Nupkins. And here she sobbed too.

“Isn’t it too much, when he has brought all this disgrace and ridicule upon us, to taunt *me* with being the cause of it?” exclaimed Mrs. Nupkins.

“How can we ever show ourselves in society!” said Miss Nupkins.

“How can we face the Porckenhams!” cried Mrs. Nupkins.

“Or the Griggs’s!” cried Miss Nupkins.

“Or the Slummintowkens!” cried Mrs. Nupkins. “But what does your papa care! What is it to *him*!” At this dreadful reflection, Mrs. Nupkins wept with mental anguish, and Miss Nupkins followed on the same side.

Mrs. Nupkins’s tears continued to gush forth, with great velocity, until she had gained a little time to think the matter over: when she decided, in her own mind, that the best thing to do, would be to ask Mr. Pickwick and his friends to remain until the Captain’s arrival, and then to give Mr. Pickwick the opportunity he sought. If it appeared that he had spoken truly, the Captain could be turned out of the house without noising the matter abroad, and they could easily account to the Porckenhams for his disappearance, by saying that he had been appointed, through the Court influence of his family, to the Governor-Generalship of Sierra Leone, or Saugur Point, or any other of those salubrious climates which enchant Europeans so much, that, when they once get there, they can hardly ever prevail upon themselves to come back again.

When Mrs. Nupkins dried up her tears, Miss Nupkins dried up *hers*, and Mr. Nupkins was very glad to settle the matter as Mrs. Nupkins had proposed. So, Mr. Pickwick and his friends, having washed off all marks of their late encounter, were introduced to the ladies, and soon afterwards to their dinner; and Mr.

Weller, whom the magistrate with his peculiar sagacity, had discovered in half an hour to be one of the finest fellows alive, was consigned to the care and guardianship of Mr. Muzzle, who was specially enjoined to take him below, and make much of him.

“How de do, sir?” said Mr. Muzzle, as he conducted Mr. Weller down the kitchen stairs.

“Why, no con-siderable change has taken place in the state of my system, since I see you cocked up behind your governor’s chair in the parlor, a little vile ago,” replied Sam.

“You will excuse my not taking more notice of you then,” said Mr. Muzzle. “You see, master hadn’t introduced us, then. Lord, how fond he is of you, Mr. Weller, to be sure!”

“Ah,” said Sam, “what a pleasant chap he is!”

“A’n’t he?” replied Mr. Muzzle.

“So much humor,” said Sam.

“And such a man to speak,” said Mr. Muzzle. “How his ideas flow, don’t they?”

“Wonderful,” replied Sam; “they comes a-pouring out, knocking each other’s heads so fast, that they seems to stun one another; you hardly know what he’s arter, do you?”

“That’s the great merit of his style of speaking,” rejoined Mr. Muzzle. “Take care of the last step, Mr. Weller. Would you like to wash your hands, sir, before we join the ladies? Here’s a sink, with the water laid on, sir, and a clean jack-towel behind the door.”

“Ah! Perhaps I may as well have a rinse,” replied Mr. Weller, applying plenty of yellow soap to the towel, and rubbing away, till his face shone again. “How many ladies are there?”

“Only two in our kitchen,” said Mr. Muzzle, “cook and ousemaid. We keep a boy to do the dirty work, and a gal besides, but they dine in the washus.”

“Oh, they dines in the washus, do they?” said Mr. Weller.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Muzzle, “we tried ’em at our table when they first come, but we couldn’t keep ’em. The gal’s manners is dreadful vulgar; and the boy breathes so very hard while he’s eating, that we found it impossible to sit at table with him.”

“Young grampus!” said Mr. Weller.

“Oh, dreadful,” rejoined Mr. Muzzle; “but that is the worst of country service, Mr. Weller; the juniors is always so very savage. This way, sir, if you please — this way.”

Preceding Mr. Weller, with the utmost politeness, Mr. Muzzle conducted him into the kitchen.

“Mary,” said Mr. Muzzle to the pretty servant-girl, “this is Mr. Weller: a gentleman as master has sent down, to be made as comfortable as possible.”

“And your master’s a knowin’ hand, and has just sent me to the right place,” said Mr. Weller, with a glance of admiration at Mary. “If I wos master o’ this here house, I should always find the materials for comfort vere Mary wos.”

“Lor, Mr. Weller!” said Mary, blushing.

“Well, I never!” ejaculated the cook.

“Bless me, cook, I forgot you,” said Mr. Muzzle. “Mr. Weller, let me introduce you.”

“How are you, ma’am?” said Mr. Weller. “Wery glad to see you, indeed, and hope our acquaintance may be a long ’un, as the gen’l’m’n said to the fi’ pun’ note.”

When this ceremony of introduction had been gone



through, the cook and Mary retired into the back kitchen to titter for ten minutes ; then returning, all giggles and blushes, they sat down to dinner.

Mr. Weller's easy manner and conversational powers had such irresistible influence with his new friends, that before the dinner was half over, they were on a footing of perfect intimacy, and in possession of a full account of the delinquency of Job Trotter.

"I never could a-bear that Job," said Mary.

"No more you never ought to, my dear," replied Mr. Weller.

"Why not?" inquired Mary.

"Cos ugliness and svindlin' never ought to be formiliar with elegance and wirtew," replied Mr. Weller. "Ought they, Mr. Muzzle?"

"Not by no means," replied that gentleman.

Here Mary laughed, and said the cook had made her ; and the cook laughed, and said she hadn't.

"I han't got a glass," said Mary.

"Drink with me, my dear," said Mr. Weller. "Put your lips to this here tumbler, and then I can kiss you by deputy."

"For shame, Mr. Weller!" said Mary.

"What's a shame, my dear?"

"Talkin' in that way."

"Nonsense ; it a'n't no harm. It's natur' ; a'n't it. cook?"

"Don't ask me imperence," replied the cook, in a high state of delight: and hereupon the cook and Mary laughed again, till what between the beer, and the cold meat, and the laughter combined, the latter young lady was brought to the verge of choking — an alarming crisis from which she was only recovered by sundry pats on the back, and

other necessary attentions, most delicately administered by Mr. Samuel Weller.

In the midst of all this jollity and conviviality, a loud ring was heard at the garden-gate: to which the young gentleman who took his meals in the wash-house, immediately responded. Mr. Weller was in the height of his attentions to the pretty house-maid; Mr. Muzzle was busy doing the honors of the table; and the cook had just paused to laugh, in the very act of raising a huge morsel to her lips; when the kitchen-door opened, and in walked Mr. Job Trotter.

We have said in walked Mr. Job Trotter, but the statement is not distinguished by our usual scrupulous adherence to fact. The door opened, and Mr. Trotter appeared. He *would* have walked in, and was in the very act of doing so, indeed, when catching sight of Mr. Weller, he involuntarily shrunk back a pace or two, and stood gazing on the unexpected scene before him, perfectly motionless with amazement and terror.

"Here he is!" said Sam, rising with great glee. "Why we were that very moment a speaking o' you. How are you? Were *have* you been? Come in."

Laying his hand on the mulberry collar of the unresisting Job, Mr. Weller dragged him into the kitchen; and, locking the door, handed the key to Mr. Muzzle, who very coolly buttoned it up, in a side-pocket.

"Well, here's a game!" cried Sam. "Only think o' my master havin' the pleasure o' meeting youn, up-stairs, and me havin' the joy o' meetin' you down here. How *are* you gettin' on, and how *is* the chandlery bis'ness likely to do? Well, I am so glad to see you. How happy you look! It's quite a treat to see you; a'n't it, Mr. Muzzle?"

“Quite,” said Mr. Muzzle.

“So cheerful he is!” said Sam.

“In such good spirits,” said Muzzle.

“And so glad to see *us* — that makes it so much more comfortable,” said Sam. “Sit down; sit down.”

Mr. Trotter suffered himself to be forced into a chair by the fireside. He cast his small eyes, first on Mr. Weller, and then on Mr. Muzzle, but said nothing.

“Well, now,” said Sam, “afore these here ladies, I should jest like to ask you, as a sort of curiosity, wether you don’t con-sider yourself as nice and well-behaved a young gen’l’m’n, as ever used a pink check pocket-handkerchief, and the number four collection?”

“And as was ever a-going to be married to a cook,” said that lady, indignantly. “The willin!”

“And leave off his evil ways, and set up in the chandlery line, arterwards,” said the house-maid.

“Now, I’ll tell you what it is, young man,” said Mr. Muzzle, solemnly, enraged at the last two allusions, “this here lady (pointing to the cook) keeps company with me; and when you presume, sir, to talk of keeping chandlers’ shops with her, you injure me in one of the most delicatest points in which one man can injure another. Do you understand me, sir?”

Here Mr. Muzzle, who had a great notion of his eloquence, in which he imitated his master, paused for a reply.

But Mr. Trotter made no reply. So Mr. Muzzle proceeded in a solemn manner:

“It’s very probable, sir, that you won’t be wanted upstairs for several minutes, sir, because *my* master is at this moment particularly engaged in settling the hash of *your* master, sir; and therefore you’ll have leisure, sir,

for a little private talk with me, sir. Do you understand me, sir?"

Mr. Muzzle again paused for a reply; and again Mr. Trotter disappointed him.

"Well, then," said Mr. Muzzle, "I'm very sorry to have to explain myself before ladies, but the urgency of the case will be my excuse. The back kitchen's empty, sir. If you will step in there, sir, Mr. Weller will see fair, and we can have mutual satisfaction till the bell rings. Follow me, sir!"

As Mr. Muzzle uttered these words, he took a step or two towards the door; and by way of saving time, began to pull off his coat as he walked along.

Now, the cook no sooner heard the concluding words of this desperate challenge, and saw Mr. Muzzle about to put it into execution, than she uttered a loud and piercing shriek, and rushing on Mr. Job Trotter, who rose from his chair on the instant, tore and buffeted his large flat face, with an energy peculiar to excited females, and twining her hands in his long black hair, tore therefrom about enough to make five or six dozen of the very largest-sized mourning-rings. Having accomplished this feat with all the ardor which her devoted love for Mr. Muzzle inspired, she staggered back; and being a lady of very excitable and delicate feelings, instantly fell under the dresser, and fainted away.

At this moment, the bell rung.

"That's for you, Job Trotter," said Sam; and before Mr. Trotter could offer remonstrance or reply — even before he had time to stanch the wounds inflicted by the insensible lady — Sam seized one arm and Mr. Muzzle the other; and one pulling before, and the other pushing behind, they conveyed him up-stairs, and into the parlor.

It was an impressive tableau. Alfred Jingle, Esquire, alias Captain Fitz-Marshall, was standing near the door with his hat in his hand, and a smile on his face, wholly unmoved by his very unpleasant situation. Confronting him, stood Mr. Pickwick, who had evidently been inculcating some high moral lesson; for his left hand was beneath his coat-tail, and his right extended in air, as was his wont when delivering himself of an impressive address. At a little distance, stood Mr. Tupman with indignant countenance, carefully held back by his two younger friends; at the farther end of the room were Mr. Nupkins, Mrs. Nupkins, and Miss Nupkins, gloomily grand and savagely vexed.

“What prevents me,” said Mr. Nupkins, with magisterial dignity, as Job was brought in: “what prevents me from detaining these men as rogues and impostors? It is a foolish mercy. What prevents me?”

“Pride, old fellow, pride,” replied Jingle, quite at his ease. “Wouldn’t do — no go — caught a captain, eh? — ha! ha! very good — husband for daughter — biter bit — make it public — not for worlds — look stupid — very!”

“Wretch,” said Mrs. Nupkins, “we scorn your base insinuations.”

“I always hated him,” added Henrietta.

“Oh, of course,” said Jingle. “Tall young man — old lover — Sidney Porckenham — rich — fine fellow — not so rich as captain, though? — turn him away — off with him — anything for captain — nothing like captain anywhere — all the girls — raving mad — eh, Job?”

Here Mr. Jingle laughed very heartily; and Job, rubbing his hands with delight, uttered the first sound

he had given vent to, since he entered the house — a low noiseless chuckle, which seemed to intimate that he enjoyed his laugh too much, to let any of it escape in sound.

“Mr. Nupkins,” said the elder lady, “this is not a fit conversation for the servants to overhear. Let these wretches be removed.”

“Certainly, my dear,” said Mr. Nupkins. “Muzzle!”

“Your worship.”

“Open the front door.”

“Yes, your worship.”

“Leave the house!” said Mr. Nupkins, waving his hand emphatically.

Jingle smiled, and moved towards the door.

“Stay!” said Mr. Pickwick.

Jingle stopped.

“I might,” said Mr. Pickwick, “have taken a much greater revenge for the treatment I have experienced at your hands, and that of your hypocritical friend there.”

Job Trotter bowed with great politeness, and laid his hand upon his heart.

“I say,” said Mr. Pickwick, growing gradually angry, “that I might have taken a greater revenge, but I content myself with exposing you, which I consider a duty I owe to society. This is a leniency, sir, which I hope you will remember.”

When Mr. Pickwick arrived at this point, Job Trotter, with facetious gravity, applied his hand to his ear, as if desirous not to lose a syllable he uttered.

“And I have only to add, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick, now thoroughly angry, “that I consider you a rascal, and

a — a ruffian — and — and worse than any man I ever saw, or heard of, except that pious and sanctified vagabond in the mulberry livery.”

“Ha! ha!” said Jingle, “good fellow, Pickwick — fine heart — stout old boy — but must *not* be passionate — bad thing, very — by, by — see you again some day — keep up your spirits — now, Job — trot!”

With these words, Mr. Jingle stuck on his hat in the old fashion, and strode out of the room. Job Trotter paused, looked round, smiled, and then with a bow of mock solemnity to Mr. Pickwick, and a wink to Mr. Weller, the audacious slyness of which, baffles all description, followed the footsteps of his hopeful master.

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, as Mr. Weller was following.

“Sir.”

“Stay here.”

Mr. Weller seemed uncertain.

“Stay here,” repeated Mr. Pickwick.

“Mayn’t I polish that ere Job off, in the front garden?” said Mr. Weller.

“Certainly not,” replied Mr. Pickwick.

“Mayn’t I kick him out o’ the gate, sir?” said Mr. Weller.

“Not on any account,” replied his master.

For the first time since his engagement, Mr. Weller looked, for a moment, discontented and unhappy. But his countenance immediately cleared up; for the wily Mr. Muzzle, by concealing himself behind the street-door, and rushing violently out, at the right instant, contrived with great dexterity to overturn both Mr. Jingle and his attendant, down the flight of steps, into the American aloe tubs that stood beneath.

“Having discharged my duty, sir,” said Mr. Pickwick to Mr. Nupkins, “I will, with my friends, bid you farewell. While we thank you for such hospitality as we have received, permit me to assure you, in our joint names, that we should not have accepted it, or have consented to extricate ourselves in this way, from our previous dilemma, had we not been impelled by a strong sense of duty. We return to London to-morrow. Your secret is safe with us.”

Having thus entered his protest against their treatment of the morning, Mr. Pickwick bowed low to the ladies; and notwithstanding the solicitations of the family, left the room with his friends.

“Get your hat, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“It’s below stairs, sir,” said Sam, and he ran down after it.

Now, there was nobody in the kitchen, but the pretty house-maid; and as Sam’s hat was mislaid, he had to look for it; and the pretty house-maid lighted him. They had to look all over the place for the hat. The pretty house-maid, in her anxiety to find it, went down on her knees, and turned over all the things that were heaped together in a little corner by the door. It was an awkward corner. You couldn’t get at it without shutting the door first.

“Here it is,” said the pretty house-maid. “This is it, a’n’t it?”

“Let me look,” said Sam.

The pretty house-maid had stood the candle on the floor; as it gave a very dim light, Sam was obliged to go down on *his* knees before he could see whether it really was his own hat or not. It was a remarkably small corner, and so — it was nobody’s fault but the



man's who built the house — Sam and the pretty house-  
maid were necessarily very close together.

“Yes, this is it,” said Sam. “Good-by!”

“Good-by!” said the pretty house-maid.

“Good-by!” said Sam; and as he said it, he  
dropped the hat that had cost so much trouble in look-  
ing for.

“How awkward you are,” said the pretty house-maid.  
“You'll lose it again, if you don't take care.”

So, just to prevent his losing it again, she put it on for  
him.

Whether it was that the pretty house-maid's face looked  
prettier still, when it was raised towards Sam's, or wheth-  
er it was the accidental consequence of their being so  
near to each other, is matter of uncertainty to this day;  
but Sam kissed her.

“You don't mean to say you did that on purpose,”  
said the pretty house-maid, blushing.

“No, I didn't then,” said Sam; “but I will now.”

So he kissed her again.

“Sam!” said Mr. Pickwick, calling over the banis-  
ters.

“Coming, sir,” replied Sam, running up-stairs.

“How long you have been!” said Mr. Pickwick.

“There was something behind the door, sir, which  
pervented our getting it open, for ever so long, sir,” re-  
plied Sam.

And this was the first passage of Mr. Weller's first  
love.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

WHICH CONTAINS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PROGRESS OF THE ACTION OF BARDELL AGAINST PICKWICK.

HAVING accomplished the main end and object of his journey, by the exposure of Jingle, Mr. Pickwick resolved on immediately returning to London, with the view of becoming acquainted with the proceedings which had been taken against him, in the mean time, by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg. Acting upon this resolution with all the energy and decision of his character, he mounted to the back seat of the first coach which left Ipswich on the morning after the memorable occurrences detailed at length in the two preceding chapters; and accompanied by his three friends, and Mr. Samuel Weller, arrived in the metropolis, in perfect health and safety, the same evening.

Here, the friends, for a short time, separated. Messrs. Tupman, Winkle, and Snodgrass repaired to their several homes to make such preparations as might be requisite for their forthcoming visit to Dingley Dell; and Mr. Pickwick and Sam took up their present abode in very good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters: to wit, the George and Vulture Tavern and Hotel, George Yard, Lombard Street.

Mr. Pickwick had dined, finished his second pint of particular port, pulled his silk handkerchief over his head, put his feet on the fender, and thrown himself back in an easy chair, when the entrance of Mr. Weller, with his carpet bag, aroused him from his tranquil meditations.

“Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Sir,” said Mr. Weller.

“I have just been thinking, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick, “that having left a good many things at Mrs. Bardell’s, in Goswell Street, I ought to arrange for taking them away before I leave town again.”

“Wery good, sir,” replied Mr. Weller.

“I could send them to Mr. Tupman’s, for the present, Sam,” continued Mr. Pickwick, “but, before we take them away, it is necessary that they should be looked up, and put together. I wish you would step up to Goswell Street, Sam, and arrange about it.”

“At once, sir?” inquired Mr. Weller.

“At once,” replied Mr. Pickwick. “And stay, Sam,” added Mr. Pickwick, pulling out his purse, “There is some rent to pay. The quarter is not due till Christmas, but you may pay it, and have done with it. A month’s notice terminates my tenancy. Here it is, written out. Give it, and tell Mrs. Bardell she may put a bill up as soon as she likes.”

“Wery good, sir,” replied Mr. Weller; “anythin’ more, sir?”

“Nothing more, Sam.”

Mr. Weller stepped slowly to the door, as if he expected something more; slowly opened it, slowly stepped out, and had slowly closed it within a couple of inches, when Mr. Pickwick called out,

“Sam.”

“Sir,” said Mr. Weller, stepping quickly back, and closing the door behind him.

“I have no objection, Sam, to your endeavoring to ascertain how Mrs. Bardell herself seems disposed towards me, and whether it is really probable that this vile and groundless action is to be carried to extremity. I say I do not object to your doing this, if you wish it, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick.

Sam gave a short nod of intelligence, and left the room. Mr. Pickwick drew the silk handkerchief once more over his head, and composed himself for a nap. Mr. Weller promptly walked forth, to execute his commission.

It was nearly nine o'clock when he reached Goswell Street. A couple of candles were burning in the little front parlor, and a couple of caps were reflected on the window-blind. Mrs. Bardell had got company.

Mr. Weller knocked at the door, and after a pretty long interval — occupied by the party without in whistling a tune, and by a party within, in persuading a refractory flat candle to allow itself to be lighted — a pair of small boots pattered over the floor-cloth, and Master Bardell presented himself.

“Well, young townskip,” said Sam, “how's mother?”

“She's pretty well,” replied Master Bardell, “so am I.”

“Well, that's a mercy,” said Sam; “tell her I want to speak to her, will you, my hinfant fernomenon?”

Master Bardell, thus adjured, placed the refractory flat candle on the bottom stair, and vanished into the front parlor with his message.

The two caps, reflected on the window-blind, were the respective head-dresses of a couple of Mrs. Bardell's

most particular acquaintance, who had just stepped in to have a quiet cup of tea, and a little warm supper of a couple of sets of pettitoes and some toasted cheese. The cheese was simmering and browning away, most delightfully, in a little Dutch oven before the fire; and the pettitoes were getting on deliciously in a little tin saucepan on the hob; and Mrs. Bardell and her two friends were getting on very well, also, in a little quiet conversation about and concerning all their particular friends and acquaintance; when Master Bardell came back from answering the door, and delivered the message intrusted to him by Mr. Samuel Weller.

“Mr. Pickwick’s servant!” said Mrs. Bardell, turning pale.

“Bless my soul!” said Mrs. Cluppins.

“Well, I raly would *not* ha’ believed it, unless I had ha’ happened to ha’ been here!” said Mrs. Sanders.

Mrs. Cluppins was a little, brisk, busy-looking woman; and Mrs. Sanders was a big, fat, heavy-faced personage; and the two were the company.

Mrs. Bardell felt it proper to be agitated; and as none of the three exactly knew whether, under existing circumstances, any communication, otherwise than through Dodson and Fogg, ought to be held with Mr. Pickwick’s servant, they were all rather taken by surprise. In this state of indecision, obviously the first thing to be done, was to thump the boy for finding Mr. Weller at the door. So his mother thumped him, and he cried melodiously.

“Hold your noise — do — you naughty creetur!” said Mrs. Bardell.

“Yes; don’t worrit your poor mother,” said Mrs. Sanders.

“She’s quite enough to worrit her, as it is, without

you, Tommy," said Mrs. Cluppins, with sympathizing resignation.

"Ah! worse luck, poor lamb!" said Mrs. Sanders.

At all which moral reflections, Master Bardell howled the louder.

"Now, what *shall* I do?" said Mrs. Bardell to Mrs. Cluppins.

"I think you ought to see him," replied Mrs. Cluppins. "But on no account without a witness."

"I think two witnesses would be more lawful," said Mrs. Sanders, who, like the other friend, was bursting with curiosity.

"Perhaps he'd better come in here," said Mrs. Bardell.

"To be sure," replied Mrs. Cluppins, eagerly catching at the idea: "Walk in, young man; and shut the street-door first, please."

Mr. Weller immediately took the hint; and presenting himself in the parlor, explained his business to Mrs. Bardell, thus:

"Wery sorry to 'casion any personal inconwenience, ma'am, as the housebreaker said to the old lady when he put her on the fire; but as me and my governor's only jest come to town, and is jest going away ag'in, it can't be helped you see."

"Of course, the young man can't help the faults of his master," said Mrs. Cluppins, much struck by Mr. Weller's appearance and conversation.

"Certainly not," chimed in Mrs. Sanders, who, from certain wistful glances at the little tin saucepan, seemed to be engaged in a mental calculation of the probable extent of the pettitoes, in the event of Sam's being asked to stop to supper.

“So all I’ve come about, is just this here,” said Sam, disregarding the interruption; “First, to give my governor’s notice — there it is. Secondly, to pay the rent — here it is. Thirdly, to say as all his things is to be put together, and give to anybody as we sends for ’em. Fourthly, that you may let the place as soon as you like — and that’s all.”

“Whatever has happened,” said Mrs. Bardell, “I always have said, and always will say, that in every respect but one, Mr. Pickwick has always behaved himself like a perfect gentleman. His money always was as good as the bank: always.”

As Mrs. Bardell said this, she applied her handkerchief to her eyes, and went out of the room to get the receipt.

Sam well knew that he had only to remain quiet, and the women were sure to talk; so he looked alternately at the tin saucepan, the toasted cheese, the wall, and the ceiling, in profound silence.

“Poor dear!” said Mrs. Cluppins.

“Ah, poor thing!” replied Mrs. Sanders.

Sam said nothing. He saw they were coming to the subject.

“I raly cannot contain myself,” said Mrs. Cluppins, “when I think of such perjury. I don’t wish to say anything to make you uncomfortable, young man, but your master’s an old brute, and I wish I had him here to tell him so.”

“I wish you had,” said Sam.

“To see how dreadful she takes on, going moping about, and taking no pleasure in nothing, except when her friends comes in, out of charity, to sit with her, and make her comfortable,” resumed Mrs. Cluppins, glancing

at the tin saucepan and the Dutch oven, "it's shocking!"

"Barbareous," said Mrs. Sanders.

"And your master, young man! A gentleman with money, as could never feel the expense of a wife, no more than nothing," continued Mrs. Cluppins, with great volubility; "why there a'n't the faintest shade of an excuse for his behavior! Why don't he marry her?"

"Ah," said Sam, "to be sure; that's the question."

"Question, indeed," retorted Mrs. Cluppins; "she'd question him, if she'd my spirit. Hows'ever, there *is* law for us women, mis'erable creeturs as they'd make us, if they could; and that your master will find out, young man, to his cost, afore he's six months older."

At this consolatory reflection, Mrs. Cluppins bridled up and smiled at Mrs. Sanders, who smiled back again.

"The action's going on, and no mistake," thought Sam, as Mrs. Bardell reëntered with the receipt.

"Here's the receipt, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell, "and here's the change, and I hope you'll take a little drop of something to keep the cold out, if it's only for old acquaintance' sake, Mr. Weller."

Sam saw the advantage he should gain, and at once acquiesced; whereupon Mrs. Bardell produced, from a small closet, a black bottle and a wine glass; and so great was her abstraction, in her deep mental affliction, that, after filling Mr. Weller's glass, she brought out three more wine glasses, and filled them too.

"Lauk, Mrs. Bardell," said Mrs. Cluppins, "see what you've been and done!"

"Well, that is a good one!" ejaculated Mrs. Sanders.

"Ah, my poor head!" said Mrs. Bardell, with a faint smile.



Sam understood all this, of course, so he said at once, that he never could drink before supper, unless a lady drank with him. A great deal of laughing ensued, and Mrs. Sanders volunteered to humor him, so she took a slight sip out of her glass. Then, Sam said it must go all round, so they all took a slight sip. Then, little Mrs. Cluppins proposed as a toast, "Success to Bardell again Pickwick;" and then the ladies emptied their glasses in honor of the sentiment, and got very talkative directly.

"I suppose you've heard what's going forward, Mr. Weller?" said Mrs. Bardell.

"I've heerd somethin' on it," replied Sam.

"It's a terrible thing to be dragged before the public, in that way, Mr. Weller," said Mrs. Bardell; "but I see now, that it's the only thing I ought to do, and my lawyers, Mr. Dodson and Fogg, tell me, that with the evidence as we shall call, we must succeed. I don't know what I should do, Mr. Weller, if I didn't."

The mere idea of Mrs. Bardell's failing in her action, affected Mrs. Sanders so deeply, that she was under the necessity of refilling and rëemptying her glass immediately; feeling, as she said afterwards, that if she hadn't had the presence of mind to have done so, she must have dropped.

"Ven is it expected to come on?" inquired Sam.

"Either in February or March," replied Mrs. Bardell.

"What a number of witnesses there'll be, won't there?" said Mrs. Cluppins.

"Ah, won't there!" replied Mrs. Sanders.

"And won't Mr. Dodson and Fogg be wild if the plaintiff shouldn't get it?" added Mrs. Cluppins, "when they do it all on speculation!"

“Ah! won't they!” said Mrs. Sanders.

“But the plaintiff must get it,” resumed Mrs. Cluppins.

“I hope so,” said Mrs. Bardell.

“Oh, there can't be any doubt about it,” rejoined Mrs. Sanders.

“Vell,” said Sam, rising and setting down his glass.

“All I can say is, that I wish you *may* get it.”

“Thank'ee, Mr. Weller,” said Mrs. Bardell, fervently.

“And of them Dodson and Fogg, as does these sorts o' things on spec,” continued Mr. Weller, “as well as for the other kind and gen'rous people o' the same purfession, as sets people by the ears, free gratis for nothin', and sets their clerks to work to find out little disputes among their neighbors and acquaintance as vants settlin' by means o' law-suits— all I can say o' them, is, that I vish they had the revard I'd give 'em.”

“Ah, I wish they had the reward that every kind and generous heart would be inclined to bestow upon them!” said the gratified Mrs. Bardell.

“Amen to that,” replied Sam, “and a fat and happy livin' they'd get out of it! Wish you good-night, ladies.”

To the great relief of Mrs. Sanders, Sam was allowed to depart, without any reference, on the part of the hostess, to the pettitoes and toasted cheese: to which the ladies, with such juvenile assistance as Master Bardell could afford, soon afterwards rendered the amplest justice — indeed they wholly vanished, before their strenuous exertions.

Mr. Weller went his way back to the George and Vulture, and faithfully recounted to his master, such indications of the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg, as he

had contrived to pick up, in his visit to Mrs. Bardell's. An interview with Mr. Perker, next day, more than confirmed Mr. Weller's statement; and Mr. Pickwick was fain to prepare for his Christmas visit to Dingley Dell, with the pleasant anticipation that some two or three months afterwards, an action brought against him for damages sustained by reason of a breach of promise of marriage, would be publicly tried in the Court of Common Pleas: the plaintiff having all the advantages derivable, not only from the force of circumstances, but from the sharp practice of Dodson and Fogg to boot.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

SAMUEL WELLER MAKES A PILGRIMAGE TO DORKING,  
AND BEHOLDS HIS MOTHER-IN-LAW.

THERE still remaining an interval of two days, before the time agreed upon for the departure of the Pickwickians to Dingley Dell, Mr. Weller sat himself down in a back room at the George and Vulture, after eating an early dinner, to muse on the best way of disposing of his time. It was a remarkably fine day; and he had not turned the matter over in his mind ten minutes, when he was suddenly stricken filial and affectionate; and it occurred to him so strongly that he ought to go down to see his father, and pay his duty to his mother-in-law, that he was lost in astonishment at his own remissness in never thinking of this moral obligation before. Anxious to atone for his past neglect without another hour's delay, he straightway walked up-stairs to Mr. Pickwick, and requested leave of absence for this laudable purpose.

“Certainly, Sam, certainly,” said Mr. Pickwick, his eyes glistening with delight at this manifestation of filial feeling, on the part of his attendant; “certainly, Sam.”

Mr. Weller made a grateful bow.

“I am very glad to see that you have so high a sense of your duties as a son, Sam,” said Mr. Pickwick.

"I always had, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"That's a very gratifying reflection, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, approvingly.

"Wery, sir," replied Mr. Weller; "if ever I wanted anythin' o' my father, I always asked for it in a wery 'spectful and obligin' manner. If he didn't give it me, I took it, for fear I should be led to do anythin' wrong, through not havin' it. I saved him a world o' trouble this vay, sir."

"That's not precisely what I meant, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, shaking his head, with a slight smile.

"All good feelin', sir — the wery best intentions, as the gen'l'm'n said ven he run away from his wife, 'cos she seemed unhappy with him," replied Mr. Weller.

"You may go, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller; and having made his best bow, and put on his best clothes, Sam planted himself on the top of the Arundel coach, and journeyed on to Dorking.

The Marquis of Granby, in Mrs. Weller's time, was quite a model of a road-side public-house of the better class — just large enough to be convenient, and small enough to be snug.

On the opposite side of the road, was a large sign-board on a high post, representing the head and shoulders of a gentleman with an apoplectic countenance, in a red coat with deep blue facings, and a touch of the same blue over his three-cornered hat, for a sky. Over that again, were a pair of flags; beneath the last button of his coat were a couple of cannon; and the whole formed an expressive and undoubted likeness of the Marquis of Granby of glorious memory.

The bar-window displayed a choice collection of gera-

nium plants, and a well-dusted row of spirit-phials. The open shutters bore a variety of golden inscriptions, eulogistic of good beds and neat wines; and the choice group of countrymen and hostlers lounging about the stable-door and horse-trough, afforded presumptive proof of the excellent quality of the ale and spirits which were sold within. Sam Weller paused, when he dismounted from the coach, to note all these little indications of a thriving business, with the eye of an experienced traveller; and having done so, stepped in at once, highly satisfied with everything he had observed.

“Now, then!” said a shrill female voice, the instant Sam thrust in his head at the door, “what do you want, young man?”

Sam looked round in the direction whence the voice proceeded. It came from a rather stout lady of comfortable appearance, who was seated beside the fireplace in the bar, blowing the fire to make the kettle boil for tea. She was not alone; for on the other side of the fireplace, sitting bolt upright in a high-backed chair, was a man in threadbare black clothes, with a back almost as long and stiff as that of the chair itself, who caught Sam’s most particular and especial attention at once.

He was a prim-faced, red-nosed man, with a long thin countenance and a semi-rattlesnake sort of eye — rather sharp, but decidedly bad. He wore very short trousers, and black cotton stockings: which, like the rest of his apparel, were particularly rusty. His looks were starched, but his white neckerchief was not; and its long limp ends straggled over his closely buttoned waistcoat in a very uncouth and unpicturesque fashion. A pair of old, worn, beaver gloves; a broad-brimmed hat; and a faded green umbrella, with plenty of whalebone sticking through

the bottom, as if to counterbalance the want of a handle at the top; lay on a chair beside him; and being disposed in a very tidy and careful manner, seemed to imply that the red-nosed man, whoever he was, had no intention of going away in a hurry.

To do the red-nosed man justice, he would have been very far from wise if he had entertained any such intention; for, to judge from all appearances, he must have been possessed of a most desirable circle of acquaintance, if he could have reasonably expected to be more comfortable anywhere else. The fire was blazing brightly, under the influence of the bellows; and the kettle was singing gayly, under the influence of both. A small tray of tea-things was arranged on the table; a plate of hot buttered toast was gently simmering before the fire; and the red-nosed man himself, was busily engaged in converting a large slice of bread, into the same agreeable edible, through the instrumentality of a long brass toasting-fork. Beside him, stood a glass of reeking hot pine-apple rum and water, with a slice of lemon in it; and every time the red-nosed man stopped to bring the round of bread to his eye, with the view of ascertaining how it got on, he imbibed a drop or two of the hot pine-apple rum and water, and smiled upon the rather stout lady, as she blew the fire.

Sam was so lost in the contemplation of this comfortable scene, that he suffered the first inquiry of the rather stout lady to pass unheeded. It was not until it had been twice repeated, each time in a shriller tone, that he became conscious of the impropriety of his behavior.

“Governor in?” inquired Sam, in reply to the question.

“No, he isn’t,” replied Mrs. Weller, for the rather

stout lady was no other than the quondam relict and sole executrix of the dead-and-gone Mr. Clarke ; “ No, he isn’t, and I don’t expect him, either.”

“ I suppose he’s a-drivin’ up to-day ? ” said Sam.

“ He may be, or he may not,” replied Mrs. Weller, buttering the round of toast which the red-nosed man had just finished, “ I don’t know, and, what’s more, I don’t care. Ask a blessin’, Mr. Stiggins.”

The red-nosed man did as he was desired, and instantly commenced on the toast with fierce voracity.

The appearance of the red-nosed man had induced Sam, at first sight, to more than half suspect that he was the deputy shepherd, of whom his estimable parent had spoken. The moment he saw him eat, all doubt on the subject was removed, and he perceived at once that if he purposed to take up his temporary quarters where he was, he must make his footing good without delay. He therefore commenced proceedings by putting his arm over the half-door of the bar, coolly unbolting it, and leisurely walking in.

“ Mother-in-law,” said Sam, “ how are you ? ”

“ Why, I do believe he is a Weller ! ” said Mrs. W., raising her eyes to Sam’s face, with no very gratified expression of countenance.

“ I rayther think he is,” said the imperturbable Sam, “ and I hope this here reverend gen’l’m’n ’ll excuse me saying that I wish I was *the* Weller as owns you, mother-in-law.”

This was a double-barrelled compliment. It implied that Mrs. Weller was a most agreeable female, and also that Mr. Stiggins had a clerical appearance. It made a visible impression at once ; and Sam followed up his advantage by kissing his mother-in-law.



“Get along with you,” said Mrs. Weller, pushing him away.

“For shame, young man!” said the gentleman with the red nose.

“No offence, sir, no offence,” replied Sam; “you’re wery right, though; it a’n’t the right sort o’ thing, wen mothers-in-law is young and good-looking, is it, sir?”

“It’s all vanity,” said Mr. Stiggins.

“Ah, so it is,” said Mrs. Weller, setting her cap to rights.

Sam thought it was, too, but he held his peace.

The deputy shepherd seemed by no means best pleased with Sam’s arrival; and when the first effervescence of the compliment had subsided, even Mrs. Weller looked as if she could have spared him without the smallest inconvenience. However, there he was; and as he couldn’t be decently turned out, they all three sat down to tea.

“And how’s father?” said Sam.

At this inquiry, Mrs. Weller raised her hands, and turned up her eyes, as if the subject were too painful to be alluded to.

Mr. Stiggins groaned.

“What’s the matter with that ’ere gen’l’m’n?” inquired Sam.

“He’s shocked at the way your father goes on, in,” replied Mrs. Weller.

“Oh, he is, is he?” said Sam.

“And with too good reason,” added Mrs. Weller, gravely.

Mr. Stiggins took up a fresh piece of toast, and groaned heavily.

“He is a dreadful reprobate,” said Mrs. Weller.

“A man of wrath!” exclaimed Mr. Stiggins. He

took a large semicircular bite out of the toast, and groaned again.

Sam felt very strongly disposed to give the reverend Mr. Stiggins something to groan for, but he repressed his inclination, and merely asked, "What's the old 'un up to, now?"

"Up to, indeed!" said Mrs. Weller, "oh, he has a hard heart. Night after night does this excellent man — don't frown, Mr. Stiggins: I will say you *are* an excellent man — come and sit here, for hours together, and it has not the least effect upon him."

"Well, that is odd," said Sam; "it 'ud have a wery considerable effect upon me, if I wos in his place; I know that."

"The fact is, my young friend," said Mr. Stiggins, solemnly, "he has an obderrate bosom. Oh, my young friend, who else could have resisted the pleading of sixteen of our fairest sisters, and withstood their exhortations to subscribe to our noble society for providing the infant negroes in the West Indies with flannel waistcoats and moral pocket-handkerchiefs?"

"What's a moral pocket-ankercher?" said Sam; "I never see one o' them articles o' furniter."

"Those which combine amusement with instruction, my young friend," replied Mr. Stiggins: "blending select tales with wood-cuts."

"Oh, I know," said Sam; "them as hangs up in the linen-drapers' shops, with beggars' petitions and all that 'ere upon 'em?"

Mr. Stiggins began a third round of toast, and nodded assent.

"And he wouldn't be persuaded by the ladies, wouldn't he?" said Sam.

“ Sat and smoked his pipe, and said the infant negroes were — what did he say the infant negroes were ? ” said Mrs. Weller.

“ Little humbugs,” replied Mr. Stiggins, deeply affected.

“ Said the infant negroes were little humbugs,” repeated Mrs. Weller. And they both groaned at the atrocious conduct of the old gentleman.

A great many more iniquities of a similar nature might have been disclosed, only the toast being all eaten, the tea having got very weak, and Sam holding out no indications of meaning to go, Mr. Stiggins suddenly recollected that he had a most pressing appointment with the shepherd, and took himself off accordingly.

The tea-things had been scarcely put away, and the hearth swept up, when the London coach deposited Mr. Weller senior at the door ; his legs deposited him in the bar ; and his eyes showed him his son.

“ What, Sammy ! ” exclaimed the father.

“ What, old Nobs ! ” ejaculated the son. And they shook hands heartily.

“ Wery glad to see you, Sammy,” said the elder Mr. Weller, “ though how you’ve managed to get over your mother-in-law is a mystery to me. I only vish you’d write me out the receipt, that’s all.”

“ Hush ! ” said Sam, “ she’s at home, old feller.”

“ She a’n’t vithin hearing,” replied Mr. Weller ; “ she always goes and blows up, down-stairs, for a couple of hours arter tea ; so we’ll just give ourselves a damp, Sammy.”

Saying this, Mr. Weller mixed two glasses of spirits and water, and produced a couple of pipes. The father and son sitting down opposite each other : Sam on one

side the fire, in the high-backed chair, and Mr. Weller senior on the other, in an easy ditto: they proceeded to enjoy themselves with all due gravity.

"Anybody been here, Sammy?" asked Mr. Weller senior, dryly, after a long silence.

Sam nodded an expressive assent.

"Red-nosed chap?" inquired Mr. Weller.

Sam nodded again.

"Amiable man that 'ere, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, smoking violently.

"Seems so," observed Sam.

"Good hand at accounts," said Mr. Weller.

"Is he?" said Sam.

"Borrows eighteenpence on Monday, and comes on Tuesday for a shillin' to make it up half a crown; calls again on Vensday for another half crown to make it five shillin's; and goes on, doubling, till he gets it up to a five pund note in no time, like them sums in the 'rithmetic book, 'bout the nails in the horse's shoes, Sammy."

Sam intimated by a nod that he recollected the problem alluded to by his parent.

"So you wouldn't subscribe to the flannel veskits?" said Sam, after another interval of smoking.

"Cert'nly not," replied Mr. Weller; "what's the good o' flannel veskits to the young niggers abroad? But I'll tell you what it is, Sammy," said Mr. Weller, lowering his voice, and bending across the fireplace: "I'd come down wery handsome towards straight veskits for some people at home."

As Mr. Weller said this, he slowly recovered his former position, and winked at his first-born, in a profound manner.

“It cert’nly seems a queer start to send out pocket-ankerchers to people as don’t know the use on ’em,” observed Sam.

“They’re always a doin’ some gammon of that sort, Sammy,” replied his father. “T’other Sunday I wos walkin’ up the road, wen who should I see, a-standin’ at a chapel-door, with a blue soup-plate in her hand, but your mother-in-law ! I werily believe there was change for a couple o’ suv’rins in it, then, Sammy, all in ha’pence ; and as the people come out, they rattled the pennies in, till you’d ha’ thought that no mortal plate as ever was baked, could ha’ stood the wear and tear. What d’ye think it was all for ?”

“For another tea-drinkin’, perhaps,” said Sam.

“Not a bit on it,” replied the father: “for the shepherd’s water-rate, Sammy.”

“The shepherd’s water-rate !” said Sam.

“Ay,” replied Mr. Weller, “there was three quarters owin’, and the shepherd hadn’t paid a farden, not he — perhaps it might be on account that water warn’t o’ so much use to him, for it’s wery little o’ that tap he drinks, Sammy, wery ; he knows a trick worth a good half dozen of that, he does. Hows’ever, it warn’t paid, and so they cuts the water off. Down goes the shepherd to chapel, gives out as he’s a persecuted saint, and says he hopes the heart of the turncock as cut the water off, ’ll be softened, and turned in the right vay : but he rayther thinks he’s booked for somethin’ uncomfortable. Upon this, the women calls a meetin’, sings a hymn, wotes your mother-in-law into the chair, wolunteers a collection next Sunday, and hands it all over to the shepherd. And if he a’n’t got enough out on ’em, Sammy, to make him free of the water company for life,”

said Mr. Weller, in conclusion, "I'm one Dutchman, and you're another, and that's all about it."

Mr. Weller smoked for some minutes in silence, and then resumed :

"The worst o' these here shepherds is, my boy, that they reg'larly turns the heads of all the young ladies, about here. Lord bless their little hearts, they thinks it's all right, and don't know no better ; but they're the wictims o' gammon, Samivel, they're the wictims o' gammon."

"I s'pose they are," said Sam.

"Nothin' else," said Mr. Weller, shaking his head gravely : "and wot aggrawates me, Samivel, is to see 'em a wastin' all their time and labor in making clothes for copper-colored people as don't want 'em, and takin' no notice of the flesh-colored Christians as do. If I'd my vay, Samivel, I'd just stick some o' these here lazy shepherds behind a heavy wheelbarrow, and run 'em up and down a fourteen-inch-wide plank all day. That 'ud shake the nonsense out of 'em, if anythin' would."

Mr. Weller having delivered this gentle recipe with strong emphasis, eked out by a variety of nods and contortions of the eye, emptied his glass at a draught, and knocked the ashes out of his pipe, with native dignity.

He was engaged in this operation, when a shrill voice was heard in the passage.

"Here's your dear relation, Sammy," said Mr. Weller ; and Mrs. W. hurried into the room.

"Oh, you've come back, have you !" said Mrs. Weller.

"Yes, my dear," replied Mr. Weller, filling a fresh pipe.

"Has Mr. Stiggins been back ?" said Mrs. Weller.

“No, my dear, he hasn’t,” replied Mr. Weller, lighting the pipe by the ingenious process of holding to the bowl thereof, between the tongs, a red-hot coal from the adjacent fire; “and what’s more, my dear, I shall manage to survive it, if he don’t come back at all.”

“Ugh, you wretch!” said Mrs. Weller.

“Thank’ee, my love,” said Mr. Weller.

“Come, come, father,” said Sam, “none o’ these little lovin’s afore strangers. Here’s the reverend gen’l’m’n a-comin’ in now.”

At this announcement, Mrs. Weller hastily wiped off the tears which she had just begun to force on; and Mr. W. drew his chair sullenly into the chimney corner.

Mr. Stiggins was easily prevailed on, to take another glass of the hot pine-apple rum and water, and a second, and a third, and then to refresh himself with a slight supper, previous to beginning again. He sat on the same side as Mr. Weller senior; and every time he could contrive to do so, unseen by his wife, that gentleman indicated to his son the hidden emotions of his bosom by shaking his fist over the deputy shepherd’s head: a process which afforded his son the most unmingled delight and satisfaction: the more especially as Mr. Stiggins went on, quietly drinking the hot pine-apple rum and water, wholly unconscious of what was going forward.

The major part of the conversation was confined to Mrs. Weller and the reverend Mr. Stiggins; and the topics principally descanted on, were the virtues of the shepherd, the worthiness of his flock, and the high crimes and misdemeanors of everybody beside; dissertations which the elder Mr. Weller occasionally interrupted by half-suppressed references to a gentleman of

the name of Walker, and other running commentaries of the same kind.

At length Mr. Stiggins, with several most indubitable symptoms of having quite as much pine-apple rum and water about him, as he could comfortably accommodate, took his hat and his leave: and Sam was, immediately afterwards, shown to his bed by his father. The respectable old gentleman wrung his hand fervently, and seemed disposed to address some observation to his son; but on Mrs. Weller advancing towards him, he appeared to relinquish that intention, and abruptly bade him good-night.

Sam was up betimes next day, and having partaken of a hasty breakfast, prepared to return to London. He had scarcely set foot without the house, when his father stood before him.

“Goin’, Sammy?” inquired Mr. Weller.

“Off at once,” replied Sam.

“I vish you could muffle that ’ere Stiggins, and take him with you,” said Mr. Weller.

“I am ashamed on you!” said Sam, reproachfully; “what do you let him show his red nose in the Markis o’ Granby at all, for?”

Mr. Weller the elder fixed on his son an earnest look, and replied, “’Cause I’m a married man, Samivel, ’cause I’m a married man. Wen you’re a married man, Samivel, you’ll understand a good many things as you don’t understand now; but vether it’s worth while goin’ through so much, to learn so little, as the charity-boy said ven he got to the end of the alphabet, is a matter o’ taste. I rayther think it isn’t.”

“Well,” said Sam, “good-by.”

“Tar, tar, Sammy,” replied his father.



“I’ve only got to say this here,” said Sam, stopping short, “that if *I* was the properiator o’ the Markis o’ Granby, and that ’ere Stiggins came and made toast in *my* bar, I’d” —

“What?” interposed Mr. Weller, with great anxiety. “What?”

— “Pison his rum and water,” said Sam.

“No!” said Mr. Weller, shaking his son eagerly by the hand, “would you raly, Sammy; would you, though?”

“I would,” said Sam. “I wouldn’t be too hard upon him, at first. I’d drop him in the water-butt, and put the lid on; and if I found he was insensible to kindness, I’d try the other persvasion.”

The elder Mr. Weller bestowed a look of deep, unspeakable admiration on his son; and, having once more grasped his hand, walked slowly away, revolving in his mind the numerous reflections to which his advice had given rise.

Sam looked after him, until he turned a corner of the road: and then set forward on his walk to London. He meditated, at first, on the probable consequences of his own advice, and the likelihood and unlikelihood of his father’s adopting it. He dismissed the subject from his mind, however, with the consolatory reflection that time alone would show; and this is the reflection we would impress upon the reader.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

A GOOD-HUMORED CHRISTMAS CHAPTER, CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF A WEDDING, AND SOME OTHER SPORTS BESIDE : WHICH ALTHOUGH IN THEIR WAY, EVEN AS GOOD CUSTOMS AS MARRIAGE ITSELF, ARE NOT QUITE SO RELIGIOUSLY KEPT UP, IN THESE DEGENERATE TIMES.

As brisk as bees, if not altogether as light as fairies, did the four Pickwickians assemble on the morning of the twenty-second day of December, in the year of grace in which these, their faithfully-recorded adventures, were undertaken and accomplished. Christmas was close at hand, in all his bluff and hearty honesty ; it was the season of hospitality, merriment, and open-heartedness ; the old year was preparing, like an ancient philosopher, to call his friends around him, and amidst the sound of feasting and revelry to pass gently and calmly away. Gay and merry was the time ; and right gay and merry were at least four of the numerous hearts that were gladdened by its coming.

And numerous indeed are the hearts to which Christmas brings a brief season of happiness and enjoyment. How many families whose members have been dispersed and scattered, far and wide, in the restless struggles of life, are then reunited, and meet once again in that

happy state of companionship, and mutual good-will, which is a source of such pure and unalloyed delight, and one so incompatible with the cares and sorrows of the world, that the religious belief of the most civilized nations, and the rude traditions of the roughest savages, alike number it among the first joys of a future condition of existence, provided for the blest and happy ! How many old recollections, and how many dormant sympathies, does Christmas time awaken !

We write these words now, many miles distant from the spot at which, year after year, we met on that day, a merry and joyous circle. Many of the hearts that throbbed so gayly then, have ceased to beat ; many of the looks that shone so brightly then, have ceased to glow ; the hands we grasped, have grown cold ; the eyes we sought, have hid their lustre in the grave ; and yet the old house, the room, the merry voices and smiling faces, the jest, the laugh, the most minute and trivial circumstances connected with those happy meetings, crowd upon our mind at each recurrence of the season, as if the last assemblage had been but yesterday ! Happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childish days ; that can recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth ; and transport the sailor and the traveller, thousands of miles away, back to his own fire-side and his quiet home !

But we are so taken up, and occupied, with the good qualities of this saint Christmas, that we are keeping Mr. Pickwick and his friends waiting in the cold, on the outside of the Muggleton coach : which they have just attained, well wrapped up in great-coats, shawls, and comforters. The portmanteaus and carpet-bags have been stowed away, and Mr. Weller and the guard are endeavor-

ing to insinuate into the fore-boot a huge codfish several sizes too large for it: which is snugly packed up, in a long brown basket, with a layer of straw over the top: and which has been left to the last, in order that he may repose in safety on the half-dozen barrels of real native oysters, all the property of Mr. Pickwick, which have been arranged in regular order, at the bottom of the receptacle. The interest displayed in Mr. Pickwick's countenance, is most intense, as Mr. Weller and the guard try to squeeze the codfish into the boot, first head first, and then tail first, and then top upwards, and then bottom upwards, and then sideways, and then longways, all of which artifices the implacable codfish sturdily resists, until the guard accidentally hits him in the very middle of the basket, whereupon he suddenly disappears into the boot, and with him, the head and shoulders of the guard himself, who, not calculating upon so sudden a cessation of the passive resistance of the codfish, experiences a very unexpected shock, to the unsmotherable delight of all the porters and by-standers. Upon this, Mr. Pickwick smiles with great good-humor, and drawing a shilling from his waistcoat pocket, begs the guard, as he picks himself out of the boot, to drink his health in a glass of hot brandy and water; at which, the guard smiles, too, and Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, and Tupman, all smile in company. The guard and Mr. Weller disappear for five minutes: most probably to get the hot brandy and water, for they smell very strongly of it, when they return: the coachman mounts to the box, Mr. Weller jumps up behind, the Pickwickians pull their coats round their legs, and their shawls over their noses; the helpers pull the horse-cloths off, the coachman shouts out a cheery "All right," and away they go.

They have rumbled through the streets, and jolted over the stones, and at length reach the wide and open country. The wheels skim over the hard and frosty ground; and the horses bursting into a canter at a smart crack of the whip, step along the road, as if the load behind them : coach, passengers, codfish, oyster-barrels, and all : were but a feather at their heels. They have descended a gentle slope, and enter upon a level, as compact and dry as a solid block of marble, two miles long. Another crack of the whip, and on they speed, at a smart gallop ; the horses tossing their heads and rattling the harness, as if in exhilaration at the rapidity of the motion : while the coachman, holding whip and reins in one hand, takes off his hat with the other, and resting it on his knees, pulls out his handkerchief, and wipes his forehead : partly because he has a habit of doing it, and partly because it's as well to show the passengers how cool he is, and what an easy thing it is to drive four-in-hand, when you have had as much practice as he has. Having done this very leisurely (otherwise the effect would be materially impaired), he replaces his handkerchief, pulls on his hat, adjusts his gloves, squares his elbows, cracks the whip again, and on they speed, more merrily than before.

A few small houses scattered on either side of the road, betoken the entrance to some town or village. The lively notes of the guard's key-bugle vibrate in the clear cold air, and wake up the old gentleman inside, who, carefully letting down the window-sash half-way, and standing sentry over the air, takes a short peep out, and then carefully pulling it up again, informs the other inside that they're going to change directly ; on which the other inside wakes himself up, and determines to post-

pone his next nap until after the stoppage. Again the bugle sounds lustily forth, and rouses the cottager's wife and children, who peep out at the house-door, and watch the coach till it turns the corner, when they once more crouch round the blazing fire, and throw on another log of wood against father comes home, while father himself, a full mile off, has just exchanged a friendly nod with the coachman, and turned round, to take a good long stare at the vehicle as it whirls away.

And now the bugle plays a lively air as the coach rattles through the ill-paved streets of a country town; and the coachman, undoing the buckle which keeps his ribbons together, prepares to throw them off, the moment he stops. Mr. Pickwick emerges from his coat-collar, and looks about him with great curiosity; perceiving which, the coachman informs Mr. Pickwick of the name of the town, and tells him it was market-day yesterday, both of which pieces of information Mr. Pickwick retails to his fellow-passengers; whereupon they emerge from their coat-collars too, and look about them also. Mr. Winkle, who sits at the extreme edge, with one leg dangling in the air, is nearly precipitated into the street, as the coach twists round the sharp corner by the cheese-monger's shop, and turns into the market-place; and before Mr. Snodgrass, who sits next to him, has recovered from his alarm, they pull up at the inn-yard, where the fresh horses, with cloths on, are already waiting. The coachman throws down the reins and gets down himself, and the other outside passengers drop down also: except those who have no great confidence in their ability to get up again: and they remain where they are, and stamp their feet against the coach to warm them—looking, with longing eyes and red noses, at the bright fire in the

inn-bar, and the sprigs of holly with red berries which ornament the window.

But, the guard has delivered at the corn-dealer's shop, the brown paper packet he took out of the little pouch which hangs over his shoulder by a leathern strap; and has seen the horses carefully put to; and has thrown on the pavement the saddle which was brought from London on the coach-roof; and has assisted in the conference between the coachman and the hostler about the gray mare that hurt her off-fore-leg last Tuesday; and he and Mr. Weller are all right behind, and the coachman is all right in front, and the old gentleman inside, who has kept the window down full two inches all this time, has pulled it up again, and the cloths are off, and they are all ready for starting, except the "two stout gentlemen," whom the coachman inquires after with some impatience. Hereupon the coachman, and the guard, and Sam Weller, and Mr. Winkle, Mr. Snodgrass, and all the hostlers, and every one of the idlers, who are more in number than all the others put together, shout for the missing gentlemen as loud as they can bawl. A distant response is heard from the yard, and Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Tupman come running down it, quite out of breath, for they have been having a glass of ale apiece, and Mr. Pickwick's fingers are so cold that he has been full five minutes before he could find the sixpence to pay for it. The coachman shouts an admonitory "Now then, gen'l'm'n!" the guard reëchoes it; the old gentleman inside, thinks it a very extraordinary thing that people *will* get down when they know there isn't time for it; Mr. Pickwick struggles up on one side; Mr. Tupman on the other; Mr. Winkle cries "All right;" and off they start. Shawls are pulled up, coat-collars are readjusted, the pavement ceases, the

houses disappear; and they are once again dashing along the open road, with the fresh clear air blowing in their faces, and gladdening their very hearts within them.

Such was the progress of Mr. Pickwick and his friends by the Muggleton Telegraph, on their way to Dingley Dell; and at three o'clock that afternoon, they all stood, high and dry, safe and sound, hale and hearty, upon the steps of the Blue Lion: having taken on the road quite enough of ale and brandy, to enable them to bid defiance to the frost that was binding up the earth in its iron fetters, and weaving its beautiful net-work upon the trees and hedges. Mr. Pickwick was busily engaged in counting the barrels of oysters, and superintending the disinterment of the codfish, when he felt himself gently pulled by the skirts of the coat. Looking round, he discovered that the individual who resorted to this mode of catching his attention, was no other than Mr. Wardle's favorite page: better known to the readers of this unvarnished history by the distinguishing appellation of the fat boy.

"Aha!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Aha!" said the fat boy.

As he said it, he glanced from the codfish to the oyster-barrels, and chuckled joyously. He was fatter than ever.

"Well, you look rosy enough, my young friend!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"I've been asleep, right in front of the tap-room fire," replied the fat boy, who had heated himself to the color of a new chimney-pot, in the course of an hour's nap. "Master sent me over with the shay-cart, to carry your luggage up to the house. He'd ha' sent some saddle-horses, but he thought you'd rather walk: being a cold day."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Pickwick, hastily, for he remem-



bered how they had travelled over nearly the same ground on a previous occasion. "Yes, we would rather walk. Here, Sam!"

"Sir," said Mr. Weller.

"Help Mr. Wardle's servant to put the packages into the cart, and then ride on with him. We will walk forward at once."

Having given this direction, and settled with the coachman, Mr. Pickwick and his three friends struck into the foot-path across the fields, and walked briskly away: leaving Mr. Weller and the fat boy, confronted together for the first time. Sam looked at the fat boy with great astonishment, but without saying a word, and began to stow the luggage rapidly away in the cart, while the fat boy stood quietly by, and seemed to think it a very interesting sort of thing to see Mr. Weller working by himself.

"There," said Sam, throwing in the last carpet-bag, "There they are!"

"Yes," said the fat boy, in a very satisfied tone, "there they are."

"Vell, young twenty stun," said Sam, "you're a nice specimen of a prize boy, you are!"

"Thank'ee," said the fat boy.

"You a'n't got nothin' on your mind, as makes you fret yourself, have you?" inquired Sam.

"Not as I knows on," replied the boy.

"I should rayther ha' thought, to look at you, that you was a-laborin' under an unrequited attachment to some young 'ooman," said Sam.

The fat boy shook his head.

"Vell," said Sam, "I'm glad to hear it. Do you ever drink anythin'?"

"I likes eating better," replied the boy.

"Ah," said Sam, "I should ha' s'posed that; but what I mean is, should you like a drop of anythin' as'd warm you? but I s'pose you never was cold, with all them elastic fixtures, was you?"

"Sometimes," replied the boy; "and I likes a drop of something, when it's good."

"Oh, you do, do you?" said Sam, "come this way, then!"

The Blue Lion tap was soon gained, and the fat boy swallowed a glass of liquor without so much as winking; a feat which considerably advanced him in Mr. Weller's good opinion. Mr. Weller having transacted a similar piece of business on his own account, they got into the cart.

"Can you drive?" said the fat boy.

"I should rayther think so," replied Sam.

"There, then," said the fat boy, putting the reins in his hand, and pointing up a lane. "It's as straight as you can go; you can't miss it."

With these words, the fat boy laid himself affectionately down by the side of the codfish: and placing an oyster-barrel under his head for a pillow, fell asleep instantaneously.

"Well," said Sam, "of all the cool boys ever I set my eyes on, this here young gen'l'm'n is the coolest. Come, wake up, young dropsy!"

But as young dropsy evinced no symptoms of returning animation, Sam Weller sat himself down in front of the cart, and starting the old horse with a jerk of the rein, jogged steadily on, towards Manor Farm.

Meanwhile, Mr. Pickwick and his friends having walked their blood into active circulation, proceeded

cheerfully on. The paths were hard ; the grass was crisp and frosty ; the air had a fine, dry, bracing coldness ; and the rapid approach of the gray twilight (slate-colored is a better term in frosty weather) made them look forward with pleasant anticipation to the comforts which awaited them at their hospitable entertainer's. It was the sort of afternoon that might induce a couple of elderly gentlemen, in a lonely field, to take off their great-coats and play at leap-frog in pure lightness of heart and gayety ; and we firmly believe that had Mr. Tupman at that moment proffered "a back," Mr. Pickwick would have accepted his offer with the utmost avidity.

However, Mr. Tupman did not volunteer any such accommodation, and the friends walked on, conversing merrily. As they turned into a lane they had to cross, the sound of many voices burst upon their ears ; and before they had even had time to form a guess as to whom they belonged, they walked into the very centre of the party who were expecting their arrival — a fact which was first notified to the Pickwickians, by the loud "Hurrah," which burst from old Wardle's lips, when they appeared in sight.

First, there was Wardle himself, looking, if possible, more jolly than ever ; then there were Bella and her faithful Trundle ; and, lastly, there were Emily and some eight or ten young ladies, who had all come down to the wedding, which was to take place next day, and who were in as happy and important a state as young ladies usually are, on such momentous occasions ; and they were, one and all, startling the fields and lanes, far and wide, with their frolic and laughter.

The ceremony of introduction, under such circum-

stances, was very soon performed, or we should rather say, that the introduction was soon over, without any ceremony at all; and in two minutes thereafter, Mr. Pickwick was joking with the young ladies who wouldn't come over the stile while he looked: or who, having pretty feet and unexceptionable ankles, preferred standing on the top-rail for five minutes or so, declaring that they were too frightened to move: with as much ease and absence of reserve or constraint, as if he had known them for life. It is worthy of remark, too, that Mr. Snodgrass offered Emily far more assistance than the absolute terrors of the stile (although it was full three feet high, and had only a couple of stepping-stones) would seem to require; while one black-eyed young lady in a very nice little pair of boots with fur round the top, was observed to scream very loudly, when Mr. Winkle offered to help her over.

All this was very snug and pleasant: and when the difficulties of the stile were at last surmounted, and they once more entered on the open field, old Wardle informed Mr. Pickwick how they had all been down in a body to inspect the furniture and fittings-up of the house, which the young couple were to tenant, after the Christmas holidays; at which communication Bella and Trundle both colored up, as red as the fat boy after the tap-room fire; and the young lady with the black eyes and the fur round the boots, whispered something in Emily's ear, and then glanced archly at Mr. Snodgrass: to which Emily responded that she was a foolish girl, but turned very red, notwithstanding; and Mr. Snodgrass, who was as modest as all great geniuses usually are, felt the crimson rising to the crown of his head, and devoutly wished, in the inmost recesses of his own heart, that the young

lady aforesaid, with her black eyes, and her archness, and her boots with the fur round the top, were all comfortably deposited in the adjacent county.

But if they were social and happy outside the house, what was the warmth and cordiality of their reception when they reached the farm ! The very servants grinned with pleasure at sight of Mr. Pickwick ; and Emma bestowed a half-demure, half-impudent, and all pretty look of recognition, on Mr. Tupman, which was enough to make the statue of Bonaparte in the passage unfold his arms, and clasp her within them.

The old lady was seated in customary state in the front parlor, but she was rather cross, and, by consequence, most particularly deaf. She never went out herself, and like a great many other old ladies of the same stamp, she was apt to consider it an act of domestic treason, if anybody else took the liberty of doing what she couldn't. So, bless her old soul, she sat as upright as she could, in her great chair, and looked as fierce as might be — and that was benevolent after all.

“Mother,” said Wardle, “Mr. Pickwick. You recollect him.”

“Never mind,” replied the old lady with great dignity. “Don't trouble Mr. Pickwick about an old creetur like me. Nobody cares about me now, and it's very nat'ral they shouldn't.” Here the old lady tossed her head, and smoothed down her lavender-colored silk dress, with trembling hands.

“Come, come, ma'am,” said Mr. Pickwick, “I can't let you cut an old friend in this way. I have come down expressly to have a long talk, and another rubber with you ; and we'll show these boys and girls how to dance a minuet, before they're eight-and-forty hours older.”

The old lady was rapidly giving way, but she did not like to do it all at once; so she only said, "Ah! I can't hear him."

"Nonsense, mother," said Wardle. "Come, come, don't be cross, there's a good soul. Recollect Bella; come, you must keep her spirits up, poor girl."

The good old lady heard this, for her lip quivered as her son said it. But age has its little infirmities of temper, and she was not quite brought round yet. So, she smoothed down the lavender-colored dress again, and turning to Mr. Pickwick said, "Ah, Mr. Pickwick, young people was very different when I was a girl."

"No doubt of that, ma'am," said Mr. Pickwick, "and that's the reason why I would make much of the few that have any traces of the old stock,"—and saying this, Mr. Pickwick gently pulled Bella towards him, and bestowing a kiss upon her forehead, bade her sit down on the little stool at her grandmother's feet. Whether the expression of her countenance, as it was raised towards the old lady's face, called up a thought of old times, or whether the old lady was touched by Mr. Pickwick's affectionate good-nature, or whatever was the cause, she was fairly melted; so she threw herself on her granddaughter's neck, and all the little ill-humor evaporated in a gush of silent tears.

A happy party they were, that night. Sedate and solemn were the score of rubbers in which Mr. Pickwick and the old lady played together; and uproarious was the mirth of the round table. Long after the ladies had retired, did the hot elder wine, well qualified with brandy and spice, go round, and round, and round again; and sound was the sleep, and pleasant were the dreams that followed. It is a remarkable fact, that those of Mr.

Snodgrass bore constant reference to Emily Wardle ; and that the principal figure in Mr. Winkle's visions, was a young lady with black eyes, an arch smile, and a pair of remarkably nice boots, with fur round the tops.

Mr. Pickwick was awakened, early in the morning, by a hum of voices and pattering of feet, sufficient to rouse even the fat boy from his heavy slumbers. He sat up in bed, and listened. The female servants and female visitors were running constantly to and fro ; and there were such multitudinous demands for warm water, such repeated outcries for needles and thread, and so many half-suppressed entreaties of "Oh, do come and tie me, there's a dear!" that Mr. Pickwick in his innocence began to imagine that something dreadful must have occurred : when he grew more awake, and remembered the wedding. The occasion being an important one, he dressed himself with peculiar care, and descended to the breakfast-room.

There were all the female servants in a bran-new uniform of pink muslin gowns, with white bows in their caps, running about the house in a state of excitement and agitation, which it would be impossible to describe. The old lady was dressed out, in a brocaded gown, which had not seen the light for twenty years, saving and excepting such truant rays as had stolen through the chinks in the box in which it had been laid by, during the whole time. Mr. Trundle was in high feather and spirits, but a little nervous withal. The hearty old landlord was trying to look very cheerful and unconcerned, but failing signally in the attempt. All the girls were in tears and white muslin, except a select two or three, who were being honored with a private view of the bride and bridesmaids, up-stairs. All the Pickwickians were in

most blooming array ; and there was a terrific roaring on the grass in front of the house, occasioned by all the men, boys, and hobbledehoyes attached to the farm, each of whom had got a white bow in his button-hole, and all of whom were cheering with might and main : being incited thereunto, and stimulated therein, by the precept and example of Mr. Samuel Weller, who had managed to become mighty popular already, and was as much at home as if he had been born on the land.

A wedding is a licensed subject to joke upon, but there really is no great joke in the matter after all ; — we speak merely of the ceremony, and beg it to be distinctly understood that we indulge in no hidden sarcasm upon a married life. Mixed up with the pleasure and joy of the occasion, are the many regrets at quitting home, the tears of parting between parent and child, the consciousness of leaving the dearest and kindest friends of the happiest portion of human life, to encounter its cares and troubles with others still untried, and little known : natural feelings which we would not render this chapter mournful by describing, and which we should be still more unwilling to be supposed to ridicule.

Let us briefly say, then, that the ceremony was performed by the old clergyman, in the parish church of Dingley Dell, and that Mr. Pickwick's name is attached to the register, still preserved in the vestry thereof ; that the young lady with the black eyes signed her name in a very unsteady and tremulous manner ; and that Emily's signature, as the other bridesmaid, is nearly illegible ; that it all went off in very admirable style ; that the young ladies generally, thought it far less shocking than they had expected ; and that although the owner of the black eyes and the arch smile informed Mr. Winkle that



she was sure she could never submit to anything so dreadful, we have the very best reasons for thinking she was mistaken. To all this, we may add, that Mr. Pickwick was the first who saluted the bride: and that in so doing, he threw over her neck, a rich gold watch and chain, which no mortal eyes but the jeweller's had ever beheld before. Then, the old church bell rung as gayly as it could, and they all returned to breakfast.

'Vere does the mince-pies go, young opium eater?" said Mr. Weller to the fat boy, as he assisted in laying out such articles of consumption as had not been duly arranged on the previous night.

The fat boy pointed to the destination of the pies.

"Wery good," said Sam, "stick a bit o' Christmas in 'em. T'other dish opposite. There; now we look compact and comfortable, as the father said ven he cut his little boy's head off, to cure him o' squintin'."

As Mr. Weller made the comparison, he fell back a step or two, to give full effect to it, and surveyed the preparations with the utmost satisfaction.

"Wardle," said Mr. Pickwick, almost as soon as they were all seated, "a glass of wine, in honor of this happy occasion!"

"I shall be delighted, my boy," said Wardle. "Joe—damn that boy, he's gone to sleep."

"No, I a'n't, sir," replied the fat boy, starting up from a remote corner, where, like the patron saint of fat boys—the immortal Horner—he had been devouring a Christmas pie: though not with the coolness and deliberation which characterized that young gentleman's proceedings.

"Fill Mr. Pickwick's glass."

"Yes, sir."

The fat boy filled Mr. Pickwick's glass, and then retired behind his master's chair, from whence he watched the play of the knives and forks, and the progress of the choice morsels, from the dishes, to the mouths of the company, with a kind of dark and gloomy joy that was most impressive.

"God bless you, old fellow!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Same to you, my boy," replied Wardle; and they pledged each other, heartily.

"Mrs. Wardle," said Mr. Pickwick, "we old folks must have a glass of wine together, in honor of this joyful event."

The old lady was in a state of great grandeur just then, for she was sitting at the top of the table in the brocaded gown, with her newly-married daughter on one side, and Mr. Pickwick on the other, to do the carving. Mr. Pickwick had not spoken in a very loud tone, but she understood him at once, and drank off a full glass of wine to his long life and happiness; after which the worthy old soul launched forth into a minute and particular account of her own wedding, with a dissertation on the fashion of wearing high-heeled shoes, and some particulars concerning the life and adventures of the beautiful Lady Tollinglower, deceased: at all of which the old lady herself laughed very heartily indeed, and so did the young ladies too, for they were wondering among themselves what on earth grandma was talking about. When they laughed, the old lady laughed ten times more heartily, and said that these always had been considered capital stories: which caused them all to laugh again, and put the old lady into the very best of humors. Then, the cake was cut, and passed through the ring; and the young ladies saved pieces to put under their pillows to

dream of their future husbands on ; and a great deal of blushing and merriment was thereby occasioned.

“ Mr. Miller,” said Mr. Pickwick to his old acquaintance, the hard-headed gentleman, “ a glass of wine ? ”

“ With great satisfaction, Mr. Pickwick,” replied the hard-headed gentleman, solemnly.

“ You’ll take me in ? ” said the benevolent old clergyman.

“ And me,” interposed his wife.

“ And me, and me,” said a couple of poor relations at the bottom of the table, who had eaten and drunk very heartily, and laughed at everything.

Mr. Pickwick expressed his heartfelt delight at every additional suggestion ; and his eyes beamed with hilarity and cheerfulness.

“ Ladies and gentlemen,” said Mr. Pickwick, suddenly rising —

“ Hear, hear ! Hear, hear ! Hear, hear ! ” cried Mr. Weller, in the excitement of his feelings.

“ Call in all the servants,” cried old Wardle, interposing to prevent the public rebuke which Mr. Weller would otherwise most indubitably have received from his master. “ Give them a glass of wine each, to drink the toast in. Now, Pickwick.”

Amidst the silence of the company, the whispering of the women servants, and the awkward embarrassment of the men, Mr. Pickwick proceeded.

“ Ladies and gentlemen — no, I won’t say ladies and gentlemen, I’ll call you my friends, my dear friends, if the ladies will allow me to take so great a liberty ” —

Here Mr. Pickwick was interrupted by immense applause from the ladies, echoed by the gentlemen, during which the owner of the eyes was distinctly heard to state

that she could kiss that dear Mr. Pickwick, whereupon Mr. Winkle gallantly inquired if it couldn't be done by deputy: to which the young lady with the black eyes replied, "Go away"—and accompanied the request with a look which said as plainly as a look could do——"if you can."

"My dear friends," resumed Mr. Pickwick, "I am going to propose the health of the bride and bridegroom—God bless 'em (cheers and tears). My young friend Trundle, I believe to be a very excellent and manly fellow; and his wife I know to be a very amiable and lovely girl, well qualified to transfer to another sphere of action the happiness which for twenty years she has diffused around her, in her father's house. (Here, the fat boy burst forth into stentorian blubberings, and was led forth by the coat collar, by Mr. Weller.) I wish," added Mr. Pickwick, "I wish I was young enough to be her sister's husband (cheers), but, failing that, I am happy to be old enough to be her father; for, being so, I shall not be suspected of any latent designs when I say, that I admire, esteem, and love them both (cheers and sobs). The bride's father, our good friend there, is a noble person, and I am proud to know him (great uproar). He is a kind, excellent, independent-spirited, fine-hearted, hospitable, liberal man (enthusiastic shouts from the poor relations, at all the adjectives; and especially at the two last). That his daughter may enjoy all the happiness, even he can desire; and that he may derive from the contemplation of her felicity all the gratification of heart and peace of mind which he so well deserves, is, I am persuaded, our united wish. So, let us drink their healths, and wish them prolonged life, and every blessing!"

Mr. Pickwick concluded amidst a whirlwind of ap

plause ; and once more were the lungs of the supernumeraries, under Mr. Weller's command, brought into active and efficient operation. Mr. Wardle proposed Mr. Pickwick ; and Mr. Pickwick proposed the old lady. Mr. Snodgrass proposed Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Wardle proposed Mr. Snodgrass. One of the poor relations proposed Mr. Tupman, and the other poor relation proposed Mr. Winkle ; and all was happiness and festivity, until the mysterious disappearance of both the poor relations beneath the table, warned the party that it was time to adjourn.

At dinner they met again, after a five-and-twenty mile walk, undertaken by the males at Wardle's recommendation, to get rid of the effects of the wine at breakfast. The poor relations had kept in bed all day, with the view of attaining the same happy consummation ; but, as they had been unsuccessful, they stopped there. Mr. Weller kept the domestics in a state of perpetual hilarity ; and the fat boy divided his time into small alternate allotments of eating and sleeping.

The dinner was as hearty an affair as the breakfast, and was quite as noisy, without the tears. Then came the dessert and some more toasts. Then came the tea and coffee ; and then, the ball.

The best sitting-room at Manor Farm was a good, long, dark-panelled room with a high chimney-piece, and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens, were the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses, and on all kinds of brackets, stood massive old silver candlesticks with four branches each. The carpet was up, the candles burnt bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the

hearth ; and merry voices and light-hearted laughter rung through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.

If anything could have added to the interest of this agreeable scene, it would have been the remarkable fact of Mr. Pickwick's appearing without his gaiters, for the first time within the memory of his oldest friends.

"You mean to dance?" said Wardle.

"Of course I do," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Don't you see I am dressed for the purpose?" Mr. Pickwick called attention to his speckled silk stockings, and smartly tied pumps.

"*You* in silk stockings!" exclaimed Mr. Tupman jocosely.

"And why not, sir — why not?" said Mr. Pickwick, turning warmly upon him.

"Oh, of course there is no reason why you shouldn't wear them," responded Mr. Tupman.

"I imagine not, sir — I imagine not," said Mr. Pickwick in a very peremptory tone.

Mr. Tupman had contemplated a laugh, but he found it was a serious matter ; so he looked grave, and said they were a very pretty pattern.

"I hope they are," said Mr. Pickwick, fixing his eyes upon his friend. "You see nothing extraordinary in these stockings, *as* stockings, I trust, sir?"

"Certainly not — oh, certainly not," replied Mr. Tupman. He walked away ; and Mr. Pickwick's countenance resumed its customary benign expression.

"We are all ready, I believe," said Mr. Pickwick, who was stationed with the old lady at the top of the dance, and had already made four false starts, in his excessive anxiety to commence.

“Then begin at once,” said Wardle. “Now!”

Up struck the two fiddles and the one harp, and off went Mr. Pickwick into hands across when there was a general clapping of hands, and a cry of “Stop, stop!”

“What’s the matter?” said Mr. Pickwick, who was only brought to by the fiddles and harp desisting, and could have been stopped by no other earthly power, if the house had been on fire.

“Where’s Arabella Allen?” cried a dozen voices.

“And Winkle?” added Mr. Tupman.

“Here we are!” exclaimed that gentleman, emerging with his pretty companion from the corner; as he did so, it would have been hard to tell which was the redder in the face, he or the young lady with the black eyes.

“What an extraordinary thing it is, Winkle,” said Mr. Pickwick, rather pettishly, “that you couldn’t have taken your place before.”

“Not at all extraordinary,” said Mr. Winkle.

“Well,” said Mr. Pickwick, with a very expressive smile, as his eyes rested on Arabella; “well, I don’t know that it *was* extraordinary, either, after all.”

However, there was no time to think more about the matter, for the fiddles and harp began in real earnest. Away went Mr. Pickwick — hands across — down the middle to the very end of the room, and half-way up the chimney, back again to the door — poussette everywhere — loud stamp on the ground — ready for the next couple — off again — all the figure over once more — another stamp to beat out the time — next couple, and the next, and the next again — never was such going! At last, after they had reached the bottom of the dance, and full fourteen couple after the old lady had retired in

an exhausted state, and the clergyman's wife had been substituted in her stead, did that gentleman, when there was no demand whatever on his exertions, keep perpetually dancing in his place, to keep time to the music: smiling on his partner all the while with a blandness of demeanor which baffles all description.

Long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of dancing, the newly-married couple had retired from the scene. There was a glorious supper down-stairs, notwithstanding, and a good long sitting after it; and when Mr. Pickwick awoke, late the next morning, he had a confused recollection of having, severally and confidentially, invited somewhere about five-and-forty people to dine with him at the George and Vulture, the very first time they came to London; which Mr. Pickwick rightly considered a pretty certain indication of his having taken something besides exercise, on the previous night.

"And so your family has games in the kitchen to-night, my dear, has they?" inquired Sam of Emma.

"Yes, Mr. Weller," replied Emma; "we always have on Christmas-eve. Master wouldn't neglect to keep it up, on any account."

"Your master's a verry pretty notion of keepin' anythin' up, my dear," said Mr. Weller; "I never see such a sensible sort of man as he is, or such a reg'lar gen'l'm'n."

"Oh, that he is!" said the fat boy, joining in the conversation; "don't he breed nice pork!" and the fat youth gave a semi-cannibalic leer at Mr. Weller, as he thought of the roast legs and gravy.

"Oh, you've woke up, at last, have you?" said Sam.

The fat boy nodded.

"I'll tell you what it is, young boa-constructer," said



Mr. Weller, impressively; "if you don't sleep a little less, and exercise a little more, wen you comes to be a man, you'll lay yourself open to the same sort of personal inconvenience as was inflicted on the old gen'l'm'n as wore the pigtail."

"What did they do to him?" inquired the fat boy, in a faltering voice.

"I'm a-goin' to tell you," replied Mr. Weller; "he was one o' the largest patterns as was ever turned out — reg'lar fat man, as hadn't caught a glimpse of his own shoes for five-and-forty year."

"Lor'!" exclaimed Emma.

"No, that he hadn't, my dear," said Mr. Weller, "and if you'd put an exact model of his own legs on the dinin' table afore him, he wouldn't ha' known 'em. Well, he always walks to his office with a wery handsome gold watch-chain hanging out, about a foot and a quarter, and a gold watch in his fob-pocket as was worth — I'm afraid to say how much, but as much as a watch can be — a large, ready, round manafacter, as stout for a watch, as he was for a man, and with a big face in proportion. 'You'd better not carry that 'ere watch,' says the old gen'l'm'n's friends, 'you'll be robbed on it,' says they. 'Shall I?' says he. 'Yes, will you,' says they. 'Vell,' says he, 'I should like to see the thief as could get this here watch out, for I'm blessed if *I* ever can, it's such a tight fit,' says he; 'and venever I wants to know what's o'clock, I'm obliged to stare into the bakers' shops,' he says. Well, then he laughs as hearty as if he was a-goin' to pieces, and out he walks ag'in with his powdered head and pigtail, and rolls down the Strand vith the chain hangin' out funder than ever, and the great round watch almost bu'stin' through his gray kersey

smalls. There warn't a pickpocket in all London as didn't take a pull at that chain, but the chain 'ud never break, and the watch 'ud never come out, so they soon got tired o' dragging such a heavy old gen'l'm'n along the pavement, and he'd go home and laugh till the pig-tail wibrated like the penderlum of a Dutch clock. At last, one day the old gen'l'm'n was a-rollin' along, and he sees a pickpocket as he know'd by sight, a-comin' up, arm in arm vith a little boy vith a wery large head. 'Here's a game,' says the old gen'l'm'n to himself, 'they're a-goin' to have another try, but it won't do!' So he begins a-chucklin' wery hearty, wen, all of a sudden, the little boy leaves hold of the pickpocket's arm, and rushes headforemost straight into the old gen'l'm'n's stomach, and for a moment doubles him right up vith the pain. 'Murder!' says the old gen'l'm'n. 'All right, sir,' says the pickpocket, a-wisperin' in his ear. And wen he come straight ag'in, the watch and chain was gone, and what's worse than that, the old gen'l'm'n's digestion was all wrong ever arterwards, to the wery last day of his life; so just you look about you, young feller, and take care you don't get too fat."

As Mr. Weller concluded this moral tale, with which the fat boy appeared much affected, they all three repaired to the large kitchen, in which the family were by this time assembled, according to annual custom on Christmas-eve, observed by old Wardle's forefathers from time immemorial.

From the centre of the ceiling of this kitchen, old Wardle had just suspended, with his own hands, a huge branch of misletoe, and this same branch of misletoe instantaneously gave rise to a scene of general and most delightful struggling and confusion; in the midst of

which, Mr. Pickwick, with a gallantry that would have done honor to a descendant of Lady Tollinglower herself, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mystic branch, and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. The old lady submitted to this piece of practical politeness with all the dignity which befitted so important and serious a solemnity, but the younger ladies, not being so thoroughly imbued with a superstitious veneration for the custom: or imagining that the value of a salute is very much enhanced if it cost a little trouble to obtain it: screamed and struggled, and ran into corners, and threatened and remonstrated, and did everything but leave the room, until some of the less adventurous gentlemen were on the point of desisting, when they all at once found it useless to resist any longer, and submitted to be kissed with a good grace. Mr. Winkle kissed the young lady with the black eyes, and Mr. Snodgrass kissed Emily, and Mr. Weller, not being particular about the form of being under the misletoe, kissed Emma and the other female servants, just as he caught them. As to the poor relations, they kissed everybody, not even excepting the plainer portion of the young-lady visitors, who, in their excessive confusion, ran right under the misletoe, as soon as it was hung up, without knowing it! Wardle stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene, with the utmost satisfaction; and the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating to his own use, and summarily devouring, a particularly fine mince-pie, that had been carefully put by, for somebody else.

Now, the screaming had subsided, and faces were in a glow, and curls in a tangle, and Mr. Pickwick, after kissing the old lady as before mentioned, was standing under

the mistletoe, looking with a very pleased countenance on all that was passing around him, when the young lady with the black eyes, after a little whispering with the other young ladies, made a sudden dart forward, and putting her arm round Mr. Pickwick's neck, saluted him affectionately on the left cheek; and before Mr. Pickwick distinctly knew what was the matter, he was surrounded by the whole body, and kissed by every one of them.

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the centre of the group, now pulled this way, and then that, and first kissed on the chin, and then on the nose, and then on the spectacles: and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side; but it was a still more pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick, blinded shortly afterwards with a silk handkerchief, falling up against the wall, and scrambling into corners, and going through all the mysteries of blind-man's-buff, with the utmost relish for the game, until at last he caught one of the poor relations, and then had to evade the blind-man himself, which he did with a nimbleness and agility that elicited the admiration and applause of all beholders. The poor relations caught the people who they thought would like it; and when the game flagged, got caught themselves. When they were all tired of blind-man's-buff, there was a great game at snapdragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins were gone, they sat down, by the huge fire of blazing logs, to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible.

“This,” said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, “this is, indeed, comfort.”

“Our invariable custom,” replied Mr. Wardle. “Everybody sits down with us on Christmas-eve, as you see them now — servants and all; and here we wait, until the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and beguile the time with forfeits and old stories. Trundle, my boy, rake up the fire.”

Up flew the bright sparks in myriads as the logs were stirred. The deep red blaze sent forth a rich glow, that penetrated into the furthest corner of the room, and cast its cheerful tint on every face.

“Come,” said Wardle, “a song — a Christmas song! I’ll give you one, in default of a better.”

“Bravo!” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Fill up,” cried Wardle. “It will be two hours, good, before you see the bottom of the bowl through the deep rich color of the wassail; fill up all round, and now for the song.”

Thus saying, the merry old gentleman, in a good, round, sturdy voice, commenced without more ado:

#### A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I CARE not for Spring; on his fickle wing  
 Let the blossoms and buds be borne:  
 He woos them amain with his treacherous rain,  
 And he scatters them ere the morn.  
 An inconstant elf, he knows not himself,  
 Nor his own changing mind an hour,  
 He’ll smile in your face, and, with wry grimace,  
 He’ll wither your youngest flower.

Let the Summer sun to his bright home run,  
 He shall never be sought by me;

When he's dimmed by a cloud I can laugh aloud,  
 And care not how sulky he be!  
 For his darling child is the madness wild  
 That sports in fierce fever's train;  
 And when love is too strong, it don't last long  
 As many have found to their pain.

A mild harvest night, by the tranquil light  
 Of the modest and gentle moon,  
 Has a far sweeter sheen, for me, I ween  
 Than the broad and unblushing noon.  
 But every leaf awakens my grief,  
 As it lieth beneath the tree;  
 So let Autumn air be never so fair,  
 It by no means agrees with me.

But my song I troll out, for CHRISTMAS stout,  
 The hearty, the true, and the bold;  
 A bumper I drain, and with might and main  
 Give three cheers for this Christmas old!  
 We'll usher him in with a merry din  
 That shall gladden his joyous heart,  
 And we'll keep him up, while there's bite or sup,  
 And in fellowship good, we'll part.

In his fine honest pride, he scorns to hide  
 One jot of his hard-weather scars;  
 They're no disgrace, for there's much the same trace  
 On the cheeks of our bravest tars.  
 Then again I sing till the roof doth ring,  
 And it echoes from wall to wall —  
 To the stout old wight, fair welcome to-night,  
 As the King of the Seasons all!

This song was tumultuously applauded — for friends and dependents make a capital audience — and the poor relations, especially, were in perfect ecstasies of rapture. Again was the fire replenished, and again went the was-sail round.

“How it snows!” said one of the men, in a low tone.

“Snows, does it?” said Wardle.

“Rough, cold night, sir,” replied the man; “and there’s a wind got up, that drifts it across the fields, in a thick white cloud.”

“What does Jem say?” inquired the old lady. “There a’n’t anything the matter, is there?”

“No, no, mother,” replied Wardle; “he says there’s a snow-drift, and a wind that’s piercing cold. I should know that, by the way it rumbles in the chimney.”

“Ah!” said the old lady, “there was just such a wind, and just such a fall of snow, a good many years back, I recollect — just five years before your poor father died. It was a Christmas-eve, too; and I remember that on that very night he told us the story about the goblins that carried away old Gabriel Grub.”

“The story about what?” said Mr. Pickwick.

“Oh, nothing — nothing,” replied Wardle. “About an old sexton, that the good people down here, suppose to have been carried away by goblins.”

“Suppose!” ejaculated the old lady. “Is there anybody hardy enough to disbelieve it? Suppose! Haven’t you heard ever since you were a child, that he *was* carried away by the goblins, and don’t you know he was?”

“Very well, mother, he was, if you like,” said Wardle, laughing. “He *was* carried away by goblins, Pickwick; and there’s an end of the matter.”

“No, no,” said Mr. Pickwick, “not an end of it, I assure you; for I must hear how, and why, and all about it.”

Wardle smiled, as every head was bent forward to hear; and filling out the wassail with no stinted hand, nodded a health to Mr. Pickwick, and began as follows:—

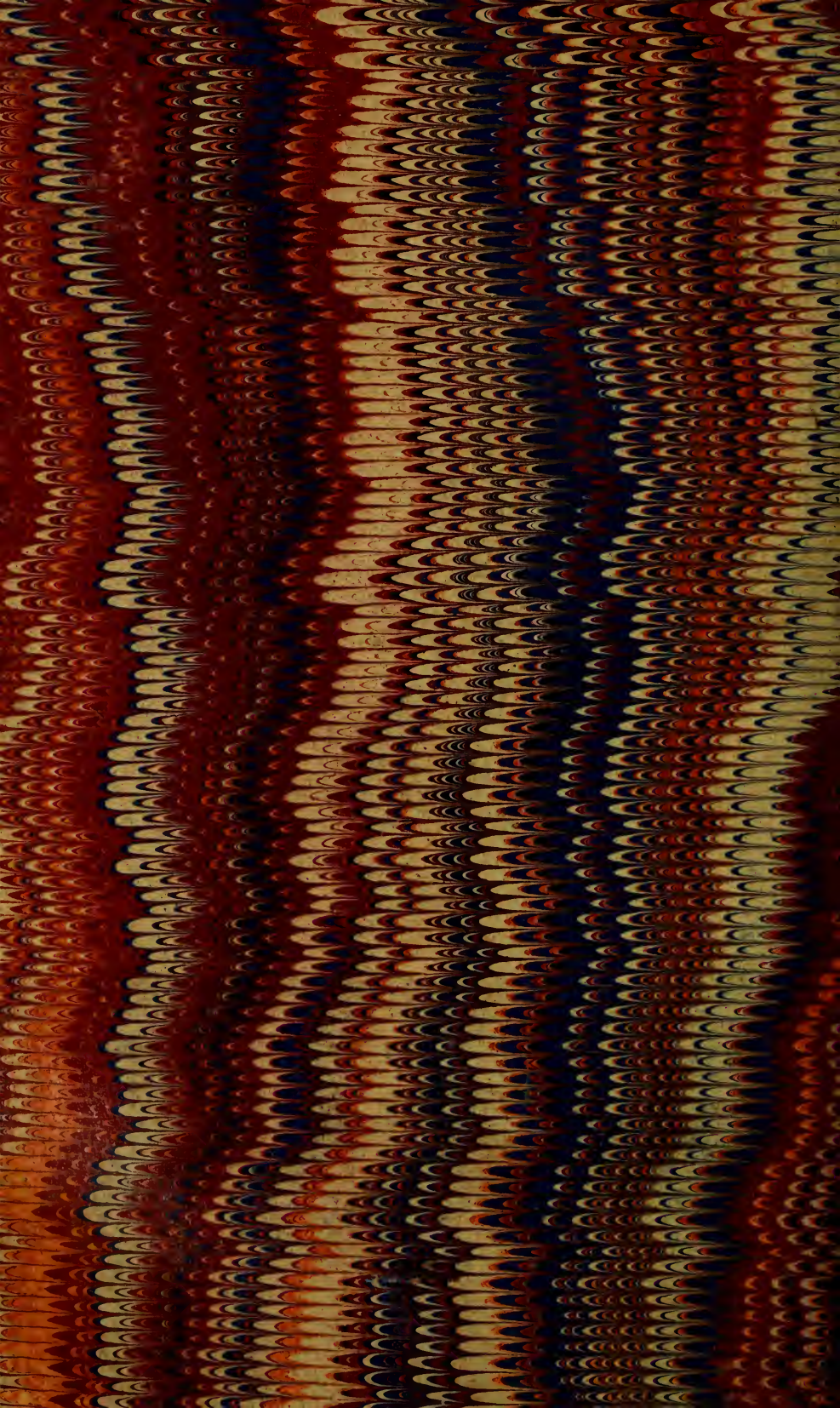
But bless our editorial heart, what a long chapter we

have been betrayed into! We had quite forgotten all such petty restrictions as chapters, we solemnly declare. So here goes, to give the goblin a fair start in a new one! A clear stage and no favor for the goblins, ladies and gentlemen, if you please.

END OF VOL. II.







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